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MISCELLANIES.

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N:

MDCCLXX.



BRITISH MUSEUM

CHW-KENSTON O. M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON

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SENTENCES,
MAXIMS,
AND
REVERIES.

VOL. II.

A



S E N T E N C E S,
M A X I M S,
A N D
R E V E R I E S.

THERE are many degrees of madness on this side of Bedlam—Those too that stop short of it, are by far the most dangerous kinds of insanity; and it would be much happier for the public, as well as for many individuals, if some people were a little madder than they appear to be.

Most oddities, I apprehend, have a twang of madness in them; though they are often the excess of some good quality.

In education, it is perhaps proper and necessary for young people to be pushed on to many hard and disagreeable things; especially as they are so often unavoidable in life.—Had it depended upon

8 SENTENCES, MAXIMS,

one's own choice, who would have dared to have been born?—Good God! to be received into the world by a frightful old woman of either sex—*Hercules* himself would have avoided it if he could.

What does a conscience void of all *great offences* signify to one who torments himself for every little misbehaviour, every inattention, of which, absence, hurry, or a hypochondriacal fit of diffidence, may have made him guilty? For one trifling neglect in point of good manners, may give more pain of mind to a man of much sensibility, than all the horrible crimes of a most flagitious life ever gave to such a profligate wretch as *Cæsar Borgia*; whom I take to be the greatest of all modern villains. For the present are still out of the question.

Catiline was but half a villain—He strikes you only with horror. The compleat villain affects you at the same time with horror and contempt.

I forget whether it is a reflection of *Machiavel's* or some other political writer, that the state or empire must go to ruin in a great hurry, whose affairs are conducted by such people as in low life



must have belonged to a gang of thieves, or made perhaps some figure amongst the banditti.

The characters that historians give of some eminent persons, are not always quite just. *Caligula*, for instance, has been represented by most of them as a monster of cruelty. For my part, I cannot help considering him as *the best of emperors*: and have always admired the humanity of his wish, that the mob of Rome had but one neck, and himself a good sharp ax to let drop upon it. A tyrant, whose taste in the *virtu* led him to bloody exercises, would naturally have wished that every Roman had at least three heads, that he might never be distressed for want of *game*. Yet, after all, I'm afraid that this good-natured sentiment of *Caligula* might, by some severe moralist, be imputed rather to indolence than to real humanity: for sometimes, to be sure, *Decipimur specie relli*,—*We are imposed upon by false appearances of virtue*.

How!—*Caliban* turned critic!—Which *Caliban*? for they're a numerous family, bless their sweet bodies! and several of them critics.—Lord! I mean the great lubberly sea-calf that was found snoring with open mouth upon the beach after the last spring-tide.—O he!—Yes,—A critic to be

10 SENTENCES, MAXIMS,

sure; and stupid as you may think him, he may be of excellent use to a reader who has his cue: for he must be read backwards; as the very reverse of his opinions will generally, I don't say always, be just and true. Most of our present critics naturally enough put me in mind of an arch thing that a certain witty gentleman said upon a similar occasion—*Optat Ephippia bos piger*—*The heavy ox would gladly be as fine as a horse*. Just as if an awkward, clumsy, dancing bear should be smit with the ambition of shining at the *Ridotto*.

As there are not perhaps, even in this sensible age, above three or four infallible men in all England; and one of them is sometimes inaccessible from cruel fits of the asthma, and some nasty scorbutic complaints: I should think it best, in all doubtful critical decisive situations, to consult the greatest fool of your acquaintance. And if he advises a voyage to the East Indies, be sure to throw yourself into the first ship that is to sail for Jamaica, I am told that some of the ancients used to pay a religious veneration to a certain kind of people. And they must have had some reason for it.

It would be a capital joke to observe how clever and sensible a fool thinks himself; if it was not so very common a sight as it happens to be.

When there is the least time for deliberation, one should never do any thing in a hurry.—A friend of mine, who does not want for a reasonable share of pride, told me some days ago, that he should never forgive himself for having once, in a fit of absence and fluttering spirits, too readily executed what was proposed, by a very impertinent message which came to him from a pair of people, whom he hardly knew further than by name. Tho' at the same time it happened to be the very thing that he intended to do; for the sake of avoiding such unreasonable and illiberal reflections as in some situations are naturally to be apprehended from malice or ignorance.

What d'ye mean by saying always *same day*, said day? can't you say *the same day*, you barbarian?—I have often heard you say—*lay*, where you ought to say *lie*.—Bless your body! Why do you *put always*, instead of *always put*, the adverb after the verb?—It has a vile effect: but you may sufficiently flatten your language without it; for it is languid and drawling enough at the best. You have got a despicable habit too, of saying *neither this or that*. If you understood even the mechanical rules of grammar, you would say *neither this nor that, nor any thing*.—I suppose you'll set about coining new words by and by. But depend upon

it you'll never make one that will find itself *admissible* to the English language. It will *rescue* every word that is issued from your mint.—For my part, as it seems hitherto undetermined whether one should say *never* or *ever*; as in the following instance: *If a patriot was ever so active in attempting the ruin of his country*—till this subtle point is decided, I shall sometimes say *ever*, sometimes *never*, just as it happens to suit my ear.

Pray, why don't you roll about in your carriage again, as you did when you were many years younger, and could not so easily afford it as now?—Why, sir, I am, thank Heaven, very able to walk: and without a great deal of exercise, I can neither eat nor sleep. Besides, sir, I always hated that jolting over the stones; and every good day, when I envied all foot passengers, I used to grudge myself the expence that either my own or other people's vanity cost me in that article. Now, whenever it rains or the streets are dirty, I can command a coach or a chair for a mere trifle.—But at this rate who will employ you?—None I hope but a few friends, to whom I most devoutly wish perpetual health; and as soon as this life is grown insipid to them, an easy and quick passage to a better; that my tranquillity may never be interrupted by their distress—Nay, you are welcome

to laugh at me as long as you please; but my present scheme is to pass the time as agreeably as I can, and to have no more to do with business than is consistent with that scheme.—Well thou'rt a strange fellow—a most unhappy mixture of ambition, indolence, love of pleasure, and a kind of delicacy very ill calculated to succeed in the scramble of life.—No, I beg your pardon, I am pretty well cured of my ambition.—For when I see what sort of geniuses very commonly make no small noise and bustle—But I would not be thought to envy where I have always despised.—*Non equidem invidéo, miror magis*—Tho' after all, there is but little room here for wonder, considering what kind of people constitute the great majority of all ranks in a certain overgrown town: and how even many of them that in other common affairs are not fools, to avoid the trouble of judging for themselves, often follow the rest in matters of the utmost consequence to their own precious lives.

Impudence, the thriving son of Stupidity, will make very small talents do great things.

That glaring dim-eyed pug is in such vogue, that tho' I know him to be in point of understanding amongst the most vulgar of the human race; I am almost tempted to impose so strangely upon

14 SENTENCES, MAXIMS,

my own judgment as to imagine there is something in him.

Pray who is that facetious gentleman?—He can't so much as ask how you do without laughing—He must lead a merry life—d'ye know him?—Upon my word not I. But I have observed that the dullest people generally laugh the most: from a consciousness, perhaps, of their own insipidity, which they endeavour to disguise by the exercise of laughing.

For heaven's sake, my dear friend, don't make a trade of laughing. If your aim is to be witty every hour of the day, you'll turn out a teizing disagreeable companion. When the weather or the company is against you keep yourself quiet; and never be ashamed to be dull amongst blockheads, let them be never so noisy. In conversation, wit should be accidental; otherwise you must naturally despise its vanity and affectation—Meantime after mangling a joke that has thrown ten or a dozen sensible people into a hearty fit of laughing, don't be so cruel as to doubt whether it really was a joke or not; and to conclude, because you cannot recollect all the circumstances, that the mirth it produced must have been owing to the manner of saying it. Besides, that sometimes a

very good joke can hardly be repeated without losing its spirit; the best jokes, tho' they are felt immediately by people of proper sensations, are not always easily explained as to the *mode of Titillation*, with which they affect the *risible Faculty*; except perhaps by some phlegmatic metaphysical connoisseur in wit, who never once felt a good joke in his life.—Pray, what is it that pleases you in the smell of a Jonquil, a Rose, or a Gillyflower?—If you're resolved not to enjoy their fragrance till it is explained, you may as well shut up your nose for ever.

I have seen a most unnatural extravagant piece of absurdity received with great applause; while flashes of true wit have passed without the least notice.

It is so easy to tickle fools with blasphemy, petulance, and any kind of indecent ribaldry, that these are the common resources of every crazy impudent fellow who would pass for a wit.

You never meet with any impertinence in the company of well-bred people—while you are decent and inoffensive yourself, you have no disagreeable behaviour in any shape to apprehend from them. And the more wit any man has, you will, almost without exception, find him the less apt to be petulant.

16 SENTENCES, MAXIMS,

There is nothing so provoking as the impertinent compliments of a fool who wishes you well; who shocks you while he thinks he is doing you a pleasure.

It happened, as I have been informed, that several years ago a gentleman, whose name I cannot at present recollect, observed to Mr. T. that Mr. B. though he past for a man of genius, was rather a hum-drum companion, and seldom said any thing very remarkable. To which Mr. M. told me that Mr. T. replied, — Aye, but he never fails to improve what *you* say—This seemed to be performing the part of rather a cold back friend. For I have known Mr. T. shine whole evenings together upon hints in a manner whispered to him by the foresaid Mr. B—; while he happened to be either too modest or too indolent to pursue them himself.—But a man of ticklish sensations may find it impossible to be happy and in good humour in the company of certain particular people, whom at the same time he may perhaps regard for some good qualities.

I forget who told me that Mr. T. should once upon a time have asked how a certain gentleman, whose name has slipped through my memory, could possibly be a poet; as he had never once seen a

hill.—Now I apprehend that Mr. T. must have been misinformed here; for I remember to have met the very gentleman in question one Sunday evening, I think it might have been towards June or July, upon the utmost summit of *Constitution Hill*.

One evening after the rest of the company were gone, that most delightful companion Mr. Q. who *should have died hereafter*, told an acquaintance of mine, that in case he out-lived him he would do a friendly office to his memory; and asked him where he would chuse to have his bust set up. *Any where*, replied the other, after thanking Mr. Q. for the great honour he intended him, *but in Westminster Abbey*.

To come to an end with anecdotes of this kind; one, who had published some things with tolerable success, told me, that his having past for a poet, had done him more mischief, than any sensible person could easily conceive; but at the same time he could not help owning, that it had oftener than once procured him the honour of a bow in passing along the Strand or Fleetstreet, from a gentleman with whom he never had any further acquaintance. I have, oftener than once, heard the same person mention one circumstance with

18 SENTENCES, MAXIMS,

particular regret; that he had never been able to discover or guess amongst all his acquaintances, to whom he was obliged for an elegant present, left at his lodgings some years ago by a gentleman who did not leave his name; and to whom, of course, he could not express his due acknowledgements for a favour which he highly values.

Sir, says one, this piece, even if all the parts could be well performed, would hardly succeed here—It might perhaps at Paris; where every one that goes to the play, is as seriously attentive as the most devout people here are to a Sermon. But in some places natural and unexaggerated representations of life are not felt; the audience must be kept awake with shew, noise and bustle. Here the genteeler part of the company are indeed merely *spectators*; they go to see, and display themselves to one another. And what other reasonable motive can they have?—considering what kind of entertainment the stage for the most part exhibits at present?

I tell you, sir, says another upon a different occasion, this is stupid, indecent, villainous trash—But have you read it?—Yes, above a dozen lines—That's hardly enough; read the whole and then judge.—God forbid!—must I eat a whole

saddle of mutton before I have a right to say it is vile rotten stuff?—

That a writer with very middling and even contemptible parts, may do a great deal more mischief than those of the first abilities can do good, is too evident.—How much more successful have a parcel of indecent, profligate, lying, inflammatory scribblers been of late years, in stupifying, and brutalising a whole nation; than those elegant, genteel moral writers, who shone about the beginning of this century, were in refining and polishing it!—But it is much easier to set fire to a palace or a temple, than to white wash a cottage.

Some of those black-guard geniuses are Poets too, God wot!—With crazy, stupid heads and bad hearts; without one spark of imagination; without either sense, versification or language; they are Poets: and the fittest indeed to gain the applause of the vulgar, *great and small, high and low*. For they scribble just such trash as any of the rabble would that could scribble at all. Their works are truly *adapted to the meanest capacities*. Their poetry is the dullest prose spurr'd up into an awkward hobbling Afs-trot. Quite opposite to Orpheus, and those *real* poets whose moral Harmony first humanized the woodland savages, and

20 SENTENCES, MAXIMS, etc.

tamed them into social life; these nightingales of Newgate, these black swans of Fleet-ditch, these infernal Screech-owls, sing nothing but songs of discord and sedition, and treason. But not all the rage and fury of the most rancorous hearts, can rouse the poetical impotence of those Bards, to any thing above the insipidity of flat unmannerly abuse; which they and their admirers call satire. However, they cannot last long. One may venture to prophecy a short life, and an infamous memory to the stupid ditties of all such Poets; and it is an indisputable truth that no Muse ever yet dwelt in the breast of a scoundrel.

Several of those detached Sentences and Reveries, were set down as materials for a poetical satire; but as the general run of readers here don't understand verse, except it is so stupid as none but a muse-bit blockhead can possibly write, it is saving some needless pains to send them out in their present shape. So let them go: and if our noble masters the Mobility don't relish them, so much the better. They are the more likely to procure the approbation of those few judges to whose praise alone one would chuse to aspire.

A
P L A N
O F A
D E D I C A T I O N.

The late Mr. Cibber addressed the Apology for
his Life *to a certain Gentleman*; whereas I
LANCELOT TEMPLE presume to address my
SKETCHES,

To an uncertain Gentleman.

S I R,

I Humbly beg leave to lay the following sheets
at your noble and magnificent feet. In an age
where scarce any thing but false genius, and the
most impudent quackery in every shape, meet
with encouragement, I appeal to *you*, whom I
have always deemed * *the consummate judge of lite-*

* This compliment was made, several years ago, by a
writer of uncommon genius and abilities, in a Dedication
to a certain distinguished personage; though some say it has
never yet appeared upon what foundation.

VOL. II.

C

rary merit: and I fly in a fluttering hurry to your *protection*. It would offend your modesty, Sir, should I give way to the enthusiasm with which I have constantly admired your amiable behaviour in private life; in the various characters of son, father, brother, husband, uncle, cousin, lover, friend, debtor, creditor, master, etc. etc. together with your * *superlative powers of charming in conversation*.—But, good God! with what superior *brilliancy* you shine the † *Cynosure* of state, to guide its weather-beaten hulk to the port of safety and tranquillity!—To your wise, able, frugal, and most strictly æconomical conduct, throughout the operations of a needless and pernicious war, which to be sure you found unavoidable, it is chiefly owing that your country makes at present such a figure as astonishes all its neighbours. The raging flames of Vesuvius, are a paultry, black-guard, patriotic illumination compared to its lustre.—You shine, Sir, equally in peace. To your noble perseverance and obstinacy in the cause of liberty and religion, this island owes the firm, steady, manly, administration of its government,

* This is one of many news-paper compliments which I am *credibly informed* some *Patriots* from day to day have silyly made to themselves, with great success, amongst a parcel of blind, ignorant, credulous people, who never will learn to smell a rat, but where there is none.

† The star called the Dog's Tail.

not less wise than virtuous; and the capital of your country ought particularly to thank you for the present state of its incomparable police. The nice discernment too, and the distinguishing taste you have shewn in patronizing Genius in all its variety of shapes, is none of your smallest excellencies.—But I beg pardon, Sir: for I am sure you would never forgive me if I should attempt to violate your delicacy with any thing so fulsome as bare-faced praise.—Your virtues, Sir, and your fine qualities, are innumerable and beyond all expression. I could go further; but it would be invidious to say, that in an age most contemptibly weak, and most shockingly wicked, you stand almost alone to support the dignity of human nature.

But as I know, Sir, you despise every thing that looks like flattery; and are too delicate to bear even the justest praise with any degree of patience: to convince you, Sir, that after all this appearance of compliment I am no flatterer; and to shew you the sincerity of my friendship (begging pardon, my most noble and sublime Patron, for the familiarity of the word)—As a sudden squall of praise may easily overset a vessel that perhaps carries more sail than ballast; and, to shift from one metaphor to another, as I should be sorry to give you such an over-dose of a sweet poison as

might drive you out of your senses, and make you expose yourself stark naked through the whole town, as mad as any king who holds his residence at either of the palaces in Moorfields; I must be so plain as to tell you, Sir, that I do *not* as an author solicit your *protection*.—Bless your dear sweet *protection*!—If you have any secret to protect stupid writing from the contempt of good judges, keep up your *protection* for some other occasion. It is not impossible that you may, one time or another, be smit with the vanity of turning author yourself. It might happen next moon; if it was not for *Arthur's* or *New-market*.

But shall I at last fairly and honestly present you with a peep of the cloven foot from under the long black gown of dissimulation and hypocrisy!—You shall have it at once, without the least ceremony—Bless me, did you think me in earnest all this time!—Are you so slow of apprehension, my noble Patron, as not to perceive that the high praises with which I have at last in a whimsical fit taken it into my head to tickle your ear, are nothing but mere rascally compliments, without the least particle of sincerity?—Is your vanity so irrecoverably blind, as to make it necessary to tell you, that all this is nothing but an exercise in the thriving art of adulation; very fairly practised

A DEDICATION.

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upon one who has so long fed *me* with the delicious repast of flattery.—For which I have been near the eighth part of a century over head and ears in your debt; and now endeavour to pay you my arrears at once in your own counters—Mean time I have the *honour* to be with the most profound respect and esteem, and the most inviolable attachment,

Sir,

Your most faithful

and *superlatively* devoted

humble servant,

LANCELOT TEMPLE.

A DEDICATION

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND TO THE
GENERAL PUBLIC
OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

THE
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
HAS THE HONOR TO
PRESENT TO YOU
THIS PAMPHLET
ON THE
SUBJECT OF
THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION
IN THE
UNITED STATES

Advertisement from the Publisher.

AS two of the Author's most intimate friends, Noureddin Ali Esq. and Lancelot Temple Esq. have expressed some inclination to have their works transmitted to posterity along with *his*: he agrees to their request; in hopes that he may never have much cause to be ashamed of their company.

...from the ...
...and ...
...the ...
...have their ...
...be ...
...in hope ...
...have much ...
...of their company.

T H E
MUNCHER'S AND GUZZLER'S
D I A R Y:

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the Farmer's, the Petit-Maitre's

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Fish's, the Whale's, the Allegator's, the Phœnix's, in
a word,

THE UNNIVERSAL ALMANAC.

By NOURED D I N A L I,

Formerly of Damascus, now of Datchet-bridge, Esq;

L. L. D. M. D. D. D. A. O. P. X. Z. A. Ω.

Societatis Royalis Membrum, and Projector-General for the
Philosopher's Stone to the Emperor of the two Indies.

Tityrus tu patulum recubans sub Tegmine fago.

Polidori Virgil. Epist. ad Dionys. Halicarnass.

First Printed in the YEAR MDCCXLVIII.

T O

OMICRON * LICK-DEVIL, esq.

PRINTER IN LONDON.

S I R,

AS I live at such a distance from the press, I must take the liberty to offer you a few directions, with regard to the manner of printing the work which will be put into your hands, by my worthy friend Dribble-verse Pufftrash, esq. the bookseller. In the first place, I desire the type may not be invisibly small, nor even such a one, as is only to be perused by the microscope. It is true your small character looks neat and pretty; but then its troublesome to those, who do not consider books as mere furniture, but are of opinion that one use of them is to be read.

* It may not be improper to observe, for the information of those who have never yet committed any of their thoughts to the press, that the Printers Errand-boys are dignified with the name of *Devils*.

By Gad, Sir, this minute way of printing is enough to reduce the clearest and most transparent writers to a level with those that are the most dark, muddy, profound, mysterious and obscure : and if Brindley, and a parcel of them, carry their improvements in micography a very little further ; that most perspicuous poet the divine Virgil, even divested of his thick cloud of commentators, will, in a little time, become as unintelligible as the most puzzled prose or rhyme metaphysician, that that ever labour'd of abortive meanings, or sat upon the wind eggs of philosophy. This is all for the sake of mere neatness.—Good God ! into what will this little age dwindle ! Your little, spruce, neat, brisk, pert prigs are almost the only men in vogue ; and the *petit gout* remarkably predominates in all our works, and every thing we say, think, or do ; so much, that should St. Paul's tumble, I believe it would rise again a pretty neat thing enough, but not much above the size of a sentry-box—if it were not for some particular reasons, which a person of your sagacity cannot fail to perceive at the first glance. But perhaps, we are in the right ; for when we affect greatness we are clumsy and little still. Witness a great, little, heavy pile of very good stone, that has the impudence to stare and look big, like a great, unmeaning booby-headed lout, in the

neighbourhood of Walbroke church; which modest elegant piece of architecture is most effectually shouldered out of sight, by the awkward envy of that lubbardly giant.—But I forget, Sir, that you are a man of business; and as I hate to be tedious, I desire in the next place, that this work of mine may come abroad without any foppish or pedantic ornaments of head and tail-pieces; even though Gribelin himself were alive, and piddled still. I have seen enough of those decorations of late years to make me heartily sick of them: yet if you think it quite necessary for the engagement of readers of refinement and taste, to adorn this piece with something that shews a relish of the fine arts; I would have you insert a well designed cut of the man you must probably have seen in some of your British Almanacs, stuck through the shoulders, hips and thighs; you understand me. And pray let it be done by some one, who is a perfect master in drawing: for things of this nature, if not exquisitely good, are disgusting and offensive to a delicate eye. I had something else to say—Oh! it was about the choice of Mottos. In this article at least, I have it still in my power to out-do (without vanity be it said) even the most learned of my cotemporaries. And by Gad I will. There is nothing like good, apt and pertinent mottos in various languages to shew an author's reading;

and sometimes let me tell you the motto is the only well said thing in a whole book. But to let you into a piece of secret history, you must know, Sir, that I am no great linguist myself; for as to the ancient languages, I cannot honestly pretend to be perfect in any of them, except the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldaic, Troglodite, and Carthaginian; in which last, particularly, I may say without vaunting, I am as well versed, thank heaven! as most men of my inches in Europe; be the other who he will. In the modern, or if you will, the living languages, (for some of these may, perhaps, be reckoned among the number of the ancient) I find myself equally imperfect. For though I speak, as familiarly as my own mother tongue, the French, English, Chinese, Italian, German, Allemagne, High-Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Irish, the Rufs like any bear, Persian or Persic, which you will, the Laplandic, Turchestan, most of the African languages; and have a little smattering of Low-Dutch, just enough to make myself understood by a Porpus: yet I must own myself most deplorably ignorant, as to many of the American languages; particularly those that are spoke in some of the more inland parts of that vast continent, and towards the sources of the river of the Amazons, and the Oroonoko; and

especially that beautiful, pybald, black and white Lingo, pallaber'd in its greatest purity by the Creolians of Jamaica. Being thus deficient in languages, I have wrote to my good friend Mr. All-Tongue Tasteless, principal of Waxen-Nose College, in the Univerfity of Coxcomb-Den; who will, for the sake of our old friendship, supply you with plentiful forage of mottos in all languages dead and alive. But I abhor prolixity; and therefore without more words at present assure yourself, that I am at all hours, days, minutes, and seconds (till fuch time as you give me some cause, either real or imaginary, to become your bitter enemy)

Sir, your most unalterable friend,

and humble servant,

Datchet-Bridge,
Nov. 1748.

NOUREDDIN ALI.

P. S. If you think your Almanack too small for a fix-penny cut, I imagine there can be no harm in printing this Letter; and be pleased to insert it between the title page and the preface, rather than in the body of the work; but this I submit to your judgment; for it is a maxim with me never to dictate to a man in his own business. If

you apprehend, that your collectors of books may still think it a bad pennyworth, I can send you several recommendatory poems, written by my ——— I mean by some worthy friends of mine, who are pleased to think better of me than I deserve; but it looks so like vanity, I would rather not publish them. It is true, they are extremely pretty, and might of themselves make the book run like wildfire, if there was nothing else in it: but I protest, I would almost rather be excused from publishing them; for, to my great misfortune, I have not the least spark of vanity in me.

Adieu

T H E

P R E F A C E.

AS this work is calculated for promoting the knowlege and pleasure of the whole human species, it is humbly presumed, that no critic how surly, squeamish, or severe soever, will grudge it the title of the UNIVERSAL ALMANAC. Such partial performances, as the Female Spectator; Fables for the Female Sex; Letters to the Ladies, etc. etc. however instructive, or entertaining they may be to one sex, are it seems quite a dead Letter to the other; and, I suppose, as inaccessible to the male part of our species, as were the mysteries of the Bona Dea of old. On the other hand, to preserve the balance, I suppose, of erudition between the two sexes, there are productions, as expressly devoted to the service of ours; witness that delectable Hodge Podge of wit and humbur called the Gentleman's Magazine.

On this occasion I cannot help saying that Sylvanus, who is generally polite, and communicative of his fund of Knowledge and Pleasure, in this respect shews more of the Rustic than the man of Urbanity; and behaves too little like a Gentleman, while he utterly neglects the Ladies in his address. I have often lamented this unwarrantable partiality, in these and others of our modern writers; and for my own part would most chearfully bestow my little mite, for the instruction and amusement, the knowledge and pleasure, not only of all mankind, but of the whole animal creation; and would it were a million for their sakes!—To this end, while thousands of you have been fast asleep in your beds; hundreds most horribly drunk; have I past many a wakeful night in moulding this little piece, and polishing it into its present perfection. May all who have eyes or ears read it, or hear it read with profit and delight! Amen.

*Of the DOMINICAL LETTER, the
GOLDEN NUMBER, and EPACT,
FOR THE YEAR 1749.*

AS you'll have enough of these in the vulgar herd of Almanac-writers, I refer you to those blunderbuffes. I am engaged in deeper mysteries, and have other fish to fry.

Of the ECLIPSES this Year.

ONE would think that in these days the planets were in partnership with the tallow-chandlers and oil-mongers; for this year we have no less than three hundred sixty five total Eclipses of the sun. And as all above sixteen died of the fatal Eclipse last year, so all under that critical age, will die of one this.—Alas! my good friends, it is lamentable to think what numbers of beautiful damsels must be cut off in the first bloom of their charms, and as soon almost as they begin to be of some use in the world.—Come, I do but joke; for blessed be goodness! none of the Eclipses this year will be mortal.

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Don't be cast down, my dear boys and girls, old and young : these formidable appearances are nothing else but the sun and moon playing together at loggerheads. For though they have both room enough G— knows to range in, they will every now and then be making faces at one another, and come to blows, just as our earthly powers do. But do not you officiously interpose in the quarrels of your superiors; fight dog, fight bear for me, I'll insure both their buffs for five hundred pounds; though my whole stock at present does not amount to above two and seven pence half-penny.

And you my honest friends, who supply Covent-Garden, and other markets in town; pray let us have a little of your country chear to comfort us under those threatening aspects of the planets. I'll answer for it you shall not go home in the dark, for all the * Eclipse; especially if you don't stay in town till you have drank yourselves blind,

* Upon occasion of a solar eclipse, which happened two or three years before the date of this Almanac, the country people round London were so apprehensive of a very dark day, as black as any winter night, that the town must have fasted for one day, if it had entirely depended upon them for its subsistence.

OBSERVATIONS, PROGNOSTICATIONS, *and* DIRECTIONS *for*

J A N U A R Y.

THE poor people in Greenland, will have a bitter cold winter this year; whereas the Creolians in Jamaica will hardly have ice enough to cool their madeira. As for us, we shall have a warm January and somewhat moist; if I lie never trust me more.

If the wind does not blow from the south this month, we shall have it from the east or the north, except it come from the west. For my own part, I have never yet known a south wind blow from the north-east; though I have oftener than once felt an easterly blast from the south-west.

This year, people will not laugh very heartily at any joke that touches themselves to the quick; and your bad critics will discover much more merit, in the clumsy performances of their friends, than in productions of the truest spirit, where

they are unacquainted with the author; but especially if they have any personal dislike to him.

Great numbers of your good for nothing fellows will die in London, before this year comes to an end. The mortality will rage no where more violently than in the inns of court; but it will not extend to the men of true taste: for it does not appear, that in all those resorts of the learned, brisk, and lively, so much as one who deserves to be ranked in that class, shall perish during the entire course of this present year.

F E B R U A R Y.

NOW begin to sow your summer grain, such as rye, oats, barley, rice, potatoes, pine apples; but preserve them in the best manner you can from frost that may happen; pomegranates, parsnips, and most of the other sorts of fallad herbs; such as pompions, gourds, pickled walnuts, beet-root, candied citron, nutmegs, Durham flour of mustard-seed, sarsaparilla, rattle-snake root, cinnamon, onions, orange-chips, candied eringo roots, and the like. Set eels up to the ears in the mud, as also anchovies, and pickled sturgeon;

and sow your mountain cod within the sea mark;
for this reason, because it never thrives so well
as in salt-water.

But of all things, be sure to take care of your
hops and barley, till such time as the English
vineyards are in a greater forwardness; that we
may not fall down between two stools, as the say-
ing is.

This year you may expect to see several changes
at court; and the new m——y will be just as wise
as the old;—ay, and as public-spirited too, let
me tell you. For my own part, I believe I shall
remain a patriot still; because in all my contem-
plations of the stars, I do not as yet see either
place or pension allotted to honest Nouredin.

M A R C H.

THE wind will blow from the east all this month, and the next too—aye, and the next to that, let me tell you for your comfort, ye splenetic curs.—I'll be d—n'd if that fellow with the solemn wig is not a great fool, for all he looks so wise. He is big enough for a swan, but is only so much the more a goose. Do you call this a tragedy and be whip'd?—I will not flay you alive, you nasty satyr, but I'll have you hung up by those long ears, for daring to be so saucy as to call yourself a poet.—None of your national reflections, you futerkin! they are seldom used by those who do any credit to their own country.—Sir, your most obedient humble servant. (*aloud*) —G—d d—n you for a puppy! (*aside*) —Must I never stir out in a morning, without having my stomach turned with that d—n'd, insipid, insincere smile of thine?

A P R I L.

MARCH hares now begin to grow somewhat scarce; but instead of them you may eat any wholesome food the season affords, provided it be good of its kind. Radishes and young onions are relishing fallads, with those who delight in them: nevertheless, eat them with a little salt if you please; otherwise you may do as you will for any thing I care. Abstain from hemlock, henbane, deadly mandrake, arsenic, sublimate, etc. For most physicians agree, that all these plants are more or less unwholesome; especially if they are eat in any great quantity.

I give you fair warning that the weather will be variable most part of this month: therefore prepare yourselves for it as you think proper; for really I can't help it.

Will nobody be so kind, as to take that pert prig out of my sight? It is an abominable little fellow! Yet there is such a harmony amongst fools, that he will undoubtedly make his way in this blessed age, by those very qualities for which he

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is despised by the few who have better noses, and can make shift to smell a polecat.

M A Y.

THOUGH the more prudent kind of people, who are tolerably vers'd in your good, wholesome, superstitious saws, will now be somewhat scrupulous to be tied together, *for better for worse*; yet I perceive by the pricking of my thumbs, that divers virgins will be knighted this month, and rise up women.

Do, let us all three go to Vaux-Hall together this evening, to hear that precious fellow—what's his name?—sing

The blind eat many a fly.

—Thank you! but I had rather eat a bit of their cold chicken, or turn over a leaf of ox-buttock, with a truss of parsley—With all my heart; for I made but an indifferent dinner to day. You must know I kept myself for the breast of a veal, and when it came I could neither see, nor touch it for butter-sauce—d—n your butter-sauce!

*Nothing but butter! merciful heaven! **

* See Mr. What d'ye call him's *Shakespeare*.

Fee, fa, fum! I see two profound critics, on the North-road for London—Ah! Gad preserve my eye-sight!—I beg your pardon.—It is only Dr. Taylor, and his man.

J U N E.

W A R M weather, and either moist or dry, from the first to the eleventh; from thence to the nineteenth inclined to be sultry, especially if there be little wind, and that southerly. From the twentieth to the twenty-first inclusive, you may happen to hear some thunder, which will be attended with lightening more or less, and probably some rain; but not so much snow. From the twenty-second to the end, pleasant, warm weather, with some gentle showers, if it please heaven.

• While the sun is a broiling the crab, * neither bleed nor purge I tell you, for certain reasons, except it be proper; in that case you may venture. Ox-cheek is somewhat cloying and mawkish in this

* For the sake of such readers as have hardly astronomical knowledge enough to understand a common Almanac, it may not be amiss here to observe, that in this month the sun is in the sign *Cancer*, or the *Crab*.

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hot weather; and I have hardly ever known above three or four pounds of it sit light upon a tender stomach, at this time of the year. Where it lies heavy, the readiest cure I know of is a gentle puke.

J U L Y.

IN this month, if thou walkest ever so slow and stately along the smooth pavement, beware of peas-cods and bean shells. Those d—n'd slippery things have been the downfall of many a pretty fellow; to the great diversion of your idle shoe-cleaners, barbers boys, humorous cobblers, buckskin-breeches makers, and all the envious vermin who delight in seeing their betters humbled.

Gather your fruit yourself, my dear; and I beseech you eat it as fast as you can, fresh from the tree, or bush. I except medlars, which are never to be touch'd till they are rotten, and then they are good for nothing.

The k— of —, if he lives till then, will certainly die on the seventeenth of this month, or thereafter.

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER.

YOU all know as well as I what is to happen in these months; therefore let us jog on to November.—

This indeed proved to be exactly the case, according to my prediction, in those months of the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight; but in the present year * one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine, the case is very different.

I wish you joy—the wind is at last come about to the west; and now we shall be in better humour with ourselves and with one another.—

Fine harvest weather; and the crops not at all

* It is almost needless to inform the learned, sagacious, and enlightened *public*, that this exactness of date is in imitation of some graceful repetitions which often occur in the political works of a certain able patriotic statesman; who was at the same time a sound moral philosopher, a profound metaphysician, and such a communicative freethinker, as to exert his best abilities in converting the people of London from what little religion they had to none at all,

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defective—But what does that signify to the poor, if *the high price of the wheat* is not lowered?—In good faith not a great deal.

REVERIES AND DIRECTIONS FOR
AUGUST.

The laws, * *Lex Terra*, should blush to punish trifling crimes; to send so many poor devils every month to Tyburn for stealing handkerchiefs, while the most pernicious villainies insult and laugh at their impotence.

Now prithee, my dear Sir Humphrey, can you contrive no other way to procure the esteem of the world, but by scraping a parcel of ducats and moidores together like a thievish jack-daw?—You may buy the huzzas of the long-ear'd rabble at a very moderate expence: for two pots of beer per head they'll attend you with their hoarse acclamations all the way from the Devil to the Mansion-house; and if you please, as far as White-chapel-bars for one pot more—But at the same time, it is not so easy to raise yourself above the contempt of sensible people—Besides, even those

* See *Magna Charta*; an elegant old manuscript, upon which alone some say the liberties of Englishmen depend.

blackguards, especially the shrewder kind of them, perhaps despise you at their hearts; except indeed some foolish fit of enthusiasm is upon them. For you ought to know, that there is no sincerity in scoundrels. What the devil, do you expect honey from the wasps, my dear?—

Good G—d, Sir, what pleasure can you feel from the applause of those animals?—You may indeed make it conducive to some selfish designs, and use it as a tool of ambition. I allow there is some meaning in that. But what is quite beyond my comprehension, supposing you still to be a man of some sense, this discordant cry of an ignorant, worthless, stupid, dirty rabble, flatters your vanity. Indeed it does; and it delights you to hear this variety of a most brutish creation bellow, bleat, bray, grunt, squeak, roar, bark, mew, cackle, prate, and chatter in your praise. You must have a delicate ear, Sir, to relish such a concert. Your solid wirey nerves are asleep it would seem to the lute, the Welch-harp, and the violoncello. They thrill only to marrow-bones and cleavers, or the bob-majors of St. Giles.

Now I beseech you, my good friends, take a reasonable care of your bodily health; and don't get drunk too often in this hot weather. Begin

your dinner with soup of one kind or another, not only through the dog-days, but every day throughout the year; let whoever will say as much as he pleases to the contrary. I don't know of any food in which you may more safely indulge than turtle: and if any aphrodisiacal complaints should happen after even the most plentiful use of it, I would have you recollect whether they may not be fairly imputed to some other cause. Mean time, you had best not be too familiar with every companion you may happen to stumble upon. Provided you always take care to keep wholesome company, you may safely eat turtle three or four times a week.—As to physic, you may take a doze of salts by any apothecary's advice—When your stomach feels loaded, or your appetite is become languid, you may even venture upon a gentle emetic, with the approbation of any town doctor; but never part with above one ounce of your precious blood, without the consent of some able physician.

S E P T E M B E R.

ALIEN as I am, I wish well to the country in which I have past the greatest part of my life; to every country; to all mankind: no matter whether white, black, tawney, or copper-coloured. And I beg that my endeavours at the smallest good offices may not be thought too presumptuous.

Men, yeomen, and gentlemen of Kent; you who have already changed your cherries into hops; I conjure you, in spite of the morillo, the black and white hearts, the dukes and bleeding hearts, to restore the best of all cherries. If that is too late, which heaven forbid, at least preserve your incomparable pippin; the richest and highest flavoured of all the English apples—greatly superior to that hard, crude, insipid, uncomfortable bullet, that impudently calls itself the *golden* pippin: or the ungenial founess of the nonpareil. May the Kentish pippin flourish again—may it ever flourish! And still may the nectarine be relished in England. I beseech you don't strip you poor honest walls of the nectarine here, to make way for the washy

peach ; for this wise reason truly, that in a neighbouring country the peach has more flavour than their nectarine, which it seems is almost as insipid as your pitiful apricot.

Good-morrow, Sir,—How d'ye find yourself this evening ? — Let me feel your pulse—Oh, you're in a charming good way. Put out your tongue—Oh, better and better—you'll be quite well *in* two or three days—Don't you find yourself a great deal better ?—Why really, doctor, I don't think myself a great deal worse—But still I am teized with this cursed hiccup, and have strange catchings every now and then, and such odd feelings about my heart, as I cannot express—a beating, as it were, and a kind of fluttering and uneasiness, as I don't know how. Then I am so weak, that it is impossible, with all my restlessness and the help of five thousand furies of nurses, to turn me from my back to one of my sides, either right or left. I feel sometimes so hot, at other times so cold, that it perplexes me to death whether I am *Vesuvius*, or Mr. What d'ye call him's *icy Alps*.—Now pray, my good doctor, *what is the cause of all this?* Oh, Sir, these complaints are entirely nervous—spasmodic, Sir. They are chiefly owing to the antiperiplogistic circumgirivagations of the annular fibres of

the longitudinal sinus of the brain; with which the left transverse sinus is in some measure affected too; though I have the pleasure to tell you not to so great a degree. Besides, Sir, the nates and testes of the cerebrum—I mean the cerebellum, you understand me, are at present under a state of relaxation, and rather too pendulous; as well as some other parts of the microcosm.—As to those feelings about your heart, Sir, they plainly proceed from an abdominal distension of some of the thoracick intestines, and a loss of infundibularity in the præcordia.—My dear doctor, I apprehend you perfectly well; and now that you have accounted so clearly for the nature of my disorder, I am happy and die quite satisfied—Only rid me of these *here* nasty nurses; and may the d—l swallow the rest of those *there* delicious bottles.—A bottle of Madeira might at one time have done me some good; but you would never listen to my longings—and now 'tis too late. There's a parcel of you that will never take any hints from nature. However, doctor, lend me your hand—There—Good night.

A gentleman, whose name I forgot, was pleased the day before yesterday, when somebody was very wisely applying the stale drivelling maxim, that there was no physician to a sick child so good

as an old woman. This same gentlemen, I say, could not help observing, that it seemed to be not an uncommon opinion with regard to the grown-up children too, from four or five feet upwards to the Patagonian size. And it is no wonder, says he, that it should be so; as the great majority of mankind are old women; and people always mix the most cordially with those who the most resemble themselves. *Simile simili gaudet*; which is in plain English, *like draws to like*.

T'other day upon asking a physician, who, though as ticklish and impatient as most people, is not apt to be affronted at little impertinences in those who wish him well; why he kept so much out of the way of his business? his reply appeared to me somewhat extraordinary. He told me, as the greatest part of the present generation was hardly worth the pains of saving from the shades; and a man of honour must do the best he can for people who trust him with their lives, he chose to give them a chance of falling into worse hands; and would willingly decline the plague and trouble of negotiating with Death, except on the behalf of some friends, who ought not by any means to die while he lives. But to be very serious, and even sad, says he, I find that tho' I never could bear to be idle, nature intended me for amuse-

ment and pleasure rather than business: and least of all for a business attended with so much anxiety, and so many teizing, uncomfortable, disagreeable, illiberal circumstances, as this happens to be.

O C T O B E R.

THE weather much as usual at this time of the year, except something extraordinary in that kind should happen; as it well may for any thing I am yet able to foresee. Mean time, I am sorry to tell you—but don't be too much alarmed—that we may possibly enough have a devilish shove or two more. It is indeed a most shocking affair, that these cursed earthquakes won't yet be quiet. I hate all those underground grumblings;—there's no joking with them. The Life-guard prophet remains hitherto silent as to the particular time; which is very unkind, not to say an unwarrantable kind of misprision in him. But for that very reason you ought to be the more upon your guard. Be sure to keep a good look-out, d'ye hear me; and never fail to be prepared for a speedy retreat. Have all your jewels and other little precious moveables ready pack'd up. And as soon as you descry a red hue in the clouds, while not a breath

of air is stirring, depend upon it there's no time to be lost. — Out! — away! — begone! — to the fields in a hurry! The Lord preserve us. —

You my patron! — who, — what are you, — and, whence? — You faucy impudent beetle-wasp! what, you my patron! — Give your patronage to the *dogs* of Grub-street, and the sons of Billingsgate Bitches — *I'll none of it.* — Thou my patron! — Foh! —

My lords and gentlemen, clergymen, lawyers, merchants, and all you other respectable bodies of men in England — I beg your pardon — I am only a foreigner, a man of *Damascus*; God help me, I had not the honour to be born in England. But as I wish you as well; I cannot resist a certain impulse to tell you, that if you don't teach your populace to make a more decent use of your liberty, you may possibly one time or another lose your own. *Noureddin of Damascus* cannot with indifference behold this mortifying prospect. For though an *Alien*, *humani nihil a se alienum putat.*

Prithee, my dear Billy, what's the matter? I have found you chatty enough sometimes, and as good humoured as other people. But you have sat these two hours without almost opening your

mouth, except now and then to yawn; and you look as if you had never laughed or even smiled once in your life. For heaven's sake what's the matter?—Pooh! what's the matter?—Don't you see that sneaking vulgar impudent blackguard fellow there, that from half a crown has raised near three-fourths of a Plum, by starving himself and cheating his customers? He has neither taste nor spirit to enjoy the hundredth part of what he is worth; and was much happier when he lived upon thirteen pence half-penny a day than he is now with all his thousands. A dull rascal, that tho' he pretends to like a joke, never once in his life felt one that could make any thing laugh but a blockhead.—There's another; so sleek and pert you'd take him for an *Abbé*, if he was not a protestant divine; as far as he has any religion at all. Don't you think him old enough to behave and dress a little more soberly: but he'll curl his long hair and continue a beau to seventy and upwards. Besides, this jackanapes is a wit, God knows! He's perpetually tittering and laughing, and has been aiming all his life at a joke, without ever once hitting it. By heaven there's nothing so disgusting as the insipid vivacity of a vain fool.—Do but mind that hum-drum dozing gentleman on his left hand. He funks away most powerfully; and seems to be a deep connoisseur in Port. I

should take him to be the *land-torpedo*—Dullness is catching like most other things; and I really believe there is a stupifying power, and what the physical gentry call narcotic, in the insensible perspiration of some animals. Don't you observe something like a black rainbow about his head?—The candles burn blue!—He must either be a kind of *Antichrist*, or one of the infernal faints. Likely enough the St. Gregory of hell.—That *choice spirit* there is the devil himself—An impudent mimic, an impertinent buffoon. One of his favourite amusements is to invent a parcel of stupid lies, to make his acquaintances appear as ridiculous as he can. This semi-demi Wit has had a thousand miscarriages of dead jokes—But he'll still venture at the old trade again.—Any one of these is enough to damp all pleasantry and good humour—But altogether, good God!—Adieu—You'll pay for me—Good night—and the Lord preserve you!—

My dear Mr. *Dry Robert*, I wish you would sprinkle a little salt upon your jokes. For without some seasoning of that kind they are as mawkish as fresh cod, or the fattest Milton oysters. And be sure never to attempt a joke over hot roast beef, saddle of mutton, fillet of veal, cramm'd turkey, or any other solid dainties of that rank.

Such a serious diet is enough igad to damp the wit even of those most common-council men. But heaven forbid that the political eyes of some certain demagogues should ever be so bedimm'd with the fumes of gross fare, as to endanger their stumbling into some fatal pit, and drawing a whole blind multitude after them!—

That whimsical rogue *Ned Froth* is very fond of you at present, he knows not why. When March many-weathers comes in, he'll hate you just as cordially; for the same reason.

The devil confound the chattering magpies that taught all the rest to prate such villainous nonsense!—

N O V E M B E R.

HEIGH ho!—Tut! tut!—Oh fye, Sirs! Oh fye! good lack and well a-day! A thousand plagues upon the sobbing rains I foresee! Hey day, we shall all be poisoned with these nasty fogs! I wish you would pack them up and export them directly. Why don't the scavengers carry them off and be d—n'd? Foh! there's no breathing here for a polypus.—

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Now roast *Sir Loin* is in high season, with those that like it. As for pudding and dumpling, I would most heartily recommend my share of 'em to the devil; if I was sure they would not damp his stomach to a greasy, facetious, phlegmatic statesman, who is to die this winter of a great loggerheaded moon calf of a tale; of which he'll have a very hard delivery in presence of the whole house.

Mr. Alderman Gobblefat, you have done nothing all this while, but piddled at that little jowl of whale, and two or three fried sturgeons. Pray let me help you to this wing of an ostrich: or would you rather mumble a slice of nice camel pasty?

I dare not be positive, whether you'll have a plentiful crop of odes this season or not. I have some reasons to think not; and the general run of them will be so middling, that they'll lie somewhat heavy upon the hands of the *ode-factors*.

D E C E M B E R.

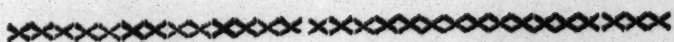
IF it sets in for violent frost, the canal in St. James's park will be froze over; and, perhaps, the Serpentine river itself. Some people will be in danger of falls upon the ice; and others who venture too soon will run some risque of getting wet.

This winter you'll have a shameful sight of sad poems, and shabby pamphlets: chiefly from the neighbourhood of St. J—s's. Some people of rank and condition, especially in the ministry, will be celebrated by other authors; but whether justly or not, I dare not determine.—Seven hundred and fifty-six thousand three hundred and ninety-two millions of plagues, upon the miscreant who first invented printing!

I doubt not but some of you will say Amen to this last wish; and upon my account too. For, perhaps, you begin to think me a tedious prating fellow, without any meaning. If so, it is time to be gone. So God be w'ye; you shall not see me again in haste, let me tell you. But when all's done, why should you complain of me in the

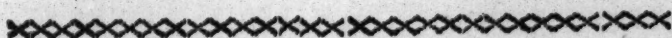
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name of fourscore and nineteen insipid, affected, impertinent brimstones? As soon as you begin to gape, can't you stop, with a vengeance? Sure this is no such distressful case, as that of being teased with an eternal talker, who sinks you into a deadly lassitude with his insipid prate, and yet won't let you sleep for the cursed noise he keeps. If you don't like it, let it alone. But if you really do not relish it, never say so—don't so much as whisper it to your deaf confessor; as you have any regard for your own paltry reputation: for I am well assured, I shall have all the sound judges of wit, humour, learning, astrology, and the rest of the seventeen sciences on my side. As to the profane, illiterate, and tasteless rabble, I don't value them of the millionth part of a brass farthing. I kick 'em, I bang 'em, I bruise 'em, I cut off their heads; if all this does not settle 'em, I run 'em through the guts, and so pock out their filthy greasy brains, that were never fit for any thing but the spermaceti manufactory. That's my way with 'em; so pray be quiet, and once more God be w'ye.



T H E
FORCED MARRIAGE,
A T R A G E D Y.

Written in the Year MDCCLIV.



FORCED MARRIAGE

THE

THE

THE following Play, which was written chiefly with a view to expose a most absurd piece of tyranny too common in life, might have appeared upon the Stage many years ago: if the Author could have dangled after Managers; or have used the access he had been offered to the prostituted patronage of two or three *great* Men, to whose taste he did not chuse to appeal; or after all, if any but the two female characters could have been properly represented at the time when the piece was finished.

The SCENE,

**A Hall in STRENI's Castle, in the Kingdom of
NAPLES.**

THE
FORCED MARRIAGE,
A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

GO, call her hither;—go!—your mistress,
woman,
My hopeful daughter!

VICTORIA.

O not yet, my Lord.
You are too warm—indeed you are.

STRENI.

Well then,
I'll never see her more. Go tell her so.—
Away!

VOL. II.

I

S C E N E II.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Compose yourself, my Lord.

STRENI.

My daughter
To fly my house ! to make herself and me
The public jest ! 'tis monstrous !

VICTORIA.

But, my Lord—

STRENI.

Fly from her own good fortune to a nunnery !
She should have pin'd her life out there, amongst
The peevish sisterhood.—But I'm too gentle ;
I've been too kind a parent ; that's my fault,
And I deserve this.—
Had I been stern, as many fathers are,
She durst as well have leapt the battlements
As stolen this flight.

VICTORIA.

'Tis true, my Lord, you have been
A tender father ; and my cousin knows it.

STRENI.

The day too fixed—and with her own consent—

The match above her proudest hopes—a prize
Scarce to be dream'd of!—Death and distraction!
This luckless wretch's flight will ruin all!
O God! O God!

VICTORIA.

Nay, never fear the Count.
He'll hardly flinch, his love's too obstinate
For that; I'll answer for his constancy,
As little as I know him.

STRENI.

What dost thou say,

VICTORIA? Yes, there's comfort in that thought.—
All may be well yet, think'st thou?—I'm glad,
however,

This rash young Hector has not swept her off.
She's here, she's safe; and all my fears from him
Are gone: thank heaven for that!—My dear

VICTORIA,

What wouldst thou say? thou hadst something to
impart—
Come, speak.

VICTOTIA.

My Lord, I know not what to say:
You're grown so choleric that I dare not speak.
You did not use to be thus. I remember
When, without fear or thinking twice, I durst
Give all my follies their full play before you.
But this unwonted rage quite frightens me;

72 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

It checks my utterance : yet, what need I fear
Lest ought too careless should escape my tongue,
When I'm not heard ?

STRENI.

Forgive me, my VICTORIA.

You see how grievously I am provoked.
Anger forgets good manners ; pardon me :
I now am calm, I am myself again.
Speak what thou wilt, as unrestrained as ever.

VICTORIA.

I shall offend.

STRENI.

Fear not. If thou hast ought
That burns within here, boldly give it vent.
I am not yet I hope so peevish grown
As to take fire at any friendly freedom.
I know thou meanst us well.

VICTORIA.

Heaven knows I do.

STRENI.

Then freely speak thy mind.

VICTORIA.

Well then, my Lord,
Since I have leave to speak, and may be heard ;
This marriage—must it be ?

STRENI.

It must, VICTORIA.

A TRAGEDY.

73

VICTORIA.

In earnest?

STRENI.

Surely.

VICTORIA.

Then I'm sorry for it.

And, STRENI, tho' to contradict your wisdom
May misbecome my sex, still more my years;
Yet in OLYMPIA's cause I will be plain,
And right or wrong declare my inmost thoughts.
Two sisters bore us; but I love OLYMPIA
More for her sweet and generous qualities
Than all these ties of blood. At your command
I come to see the nuptial rites performed:
But if her mind is so averse, I'd rather
Weep at her funeral, tho' my heart should break.

STRENI.

You cannot think I love my daughter less
Than you, VICTORIA; or less know her interest.
What other motive than paternal love
Could make me urge this marriage?

VICTORIA.

Urge a marriage!

That rigid tie which death alone dissolves!
That bold decisive step, which fixes us
In happiness or misery for ever!
That state which is a lottery at the best,
But ventured on with coyness and reluctance

74 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Has little chance to prosper ! All things else
To this are trifles, and not worth disputing.
Prevent a giddy marriage when you can ;
But never urge the wisest.

STRENI.

How you dictate !

But I have told more years than you, have seen
A little more of life too ; and 'tis hard
If old experience has not taught me something.
'Tis strange if passion, prejudice, and youth
Decide more soundly than deliberate reason,
That sees the objects in dispute divested
Of false lights and infatuating fogs.
Pray, of two judges qualified so differently,
Which is the likeliest to determine right ?

VICTORIA.

Doubtless, my Lord, the judge who sits serene
Above all mists of passion. But where is he ?
Youth has its follies : and when these decline,
A passion springs, they say, that blinds the soul
As much as that gay dotage Love itself.
A certain flower of winter !—Fy upon it !—
They call it——Avarice.

STRENI.

You're a saucy girl,
And always was so : that pretty head of thine
Has too much pertness in it.

VICTORIA.

Pardon me,

My Lord; but either now, or henceforth never
Can I with any grace or decency
Claim those bold licences your goodness used
T' indulge me in. Suppose you now at play
With a Piedmontese sharper; one that had broke
An hundred banks; a dext'rous knave that cheats
you

At every throw: and I a looker on.
Should it offend you, if by a wink or hem,
Or pinching of your arm, I gave you hints
Of this accomplish'd villain? My Lord, my Lord,
This common cheat, this hankering after more,
Betrays the wisest to strange weaknesses. [ter,
How else could this e'er happen? STRENI's daugh-
Rich STRENI's only child, has made (and not
Without her father's warrant too) a fair
Exchange of hardly-violable vows, with
A youth whose qualities and accomplishments
Equal his noble birth. Heaven! what should
hinder

Such lovers to be happy?—A richer man,
Better allied, of finer dispositions
Or parts, I dare not say—but surely older,
Steps in; and STRENI, never famed for blundering,
The foundest judge of other men's proceedings,
Prefers his suit; th' indulgent father grows

76 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

A tyrant, where he least should use his power.
It is so strange, I shall believe in witchcraft!
'Tis plain infatuation!

STRENI.

Surely older!

Ay, there's the crime no merit can atone for.
Better be rash, hot-headed, passion's slave;
Better be mad, and young; than old with all
T' advantages that can consist with years.
Yet CLAUDIO's not so very old.

VICTORIA.

No, not

Much turned of fifty.

STRENI.

Be it as it will;

He is for pleasing manners, even for person,
A more engaging man than fifty such
As those whom youth and folly recommend
To ruin half your sex.

VICTORIA.

You think him so, my Lord.

But does OLYMPIA think so? that's material.
Taste is so various, what engages one
Disgusts another: and 'tis vain to dictate
To this despotic principle of nature.
Yet, if it must be so, you should prescribe
Where I shall live, and how; what I shall wear;
Even what companions shall engross my time

For days, for weeks, for months; tho' this might
prove

A cruel trespass on my native freedom;
But let my friend for life, my fortune's lord,
On whom depends my bliss or misery,
Be of my own approving: here at least,
In this one instance may my choice be free.
I have seen the Count, and—

STRENI.

Well, what think you of him?

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I must not touch irreverently
A character that boasts your good opinion:
I dare not tamper with such sacred things.
Besides I'm but a woman, and a young one;
And to be critical in ought but dress
Or dancing would not suit me. But, if you please,
I'll tell you what some, who pretend to judge
And think they know him, say.

STRENI.

Well, what? Come on.

What do they say, good cousin?

VICTORIA.

First, they praise

His person; which they say is, for his years,
Specious enough; tall, jovial, sleek and blooming,
As if 'twere May still. Nor in his mind, they say,
Less youthful; for he's charmingly facetious;—

78 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

As far as mere corporeal jollity
Is wit and humour; but it seems no further.
For tho' he has laughed incessantly these forty
years,

'Tis strange, he has never blundered out one joke!
For his parts they say but little: that may be envy.
And yet they own that, for sagacious selfishness,
And want of heart, he has cunning and deceit
Enough t' outwit ten cardinals; for beneath
An open, frank, unguarded-like behaviour,
A shew of smooth and dimpling innocence,
It seems he hides a quicksand: and they say
He has earned his wealth as boldly as consists
With honest policy, and a just regard
For his precious head.

STRENI.

A bold free hand
To sketch a character out! The only thing
That's wanting here is likeness.

VICTORIA.

Nay, my Lord,
I only tell you what report says of him;
If that belies him 'tis no fault of mine.
I have heard indeed, that his manner, from face-
tious,
Is grown of late embarrass'd and half sad:
That he looks pensive, talks to himself, and when
He laughs, it seems an effort to disguise

Some secret grief; which looks mysteriously
 To those who mark him. But the cause is plain:
 'Tis love, 'tis foolish love, makes him so grave.—
 A hopeful youth to grow love-pensive!—Lord!
 I long to see him languish! It must be charming
 To see him languish for a Lady's fortune!

STRENI.

Fortune! What's that to him whose ample means,
 Raised by his gallant service in the war,
 From the sad ruins of an ancient seat,
 Vie with the Princes of proud Italy?
 What can a moderate portion add to him
 So opulent, and yet without an heir?
 If fortune were his aim he could have choice
 Of richer matches; but he loves *OLYMPIA*;
 He best deserves her; and she shall be his,
 Or else no child of mine. Besides, this spark,
 This *youth* you so much boast of, by report
 Ere now has found another bride.

VICTORIA.

Be that
 As it may happen. But, alas! my Lord,
 Must all the joys and comforts of her life
 Be fondly sacrificed to this ambition,
 None of her own besides, to give an heir
 To——were it the first house in Italy?
 But if there be such charms in possibly

80 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Bringing a boy, who possibly may live
 T' inherit a great fortune, wear high titles,
 And yet perhaps be neither great nor happy ;
 OLYMPIA, blest with every grace of nature,
 With fortune's bounties, and your daughter too,
 So young, may wait till other matches offer
 More to her mind, perhaps as much to yours.
 Nineteen is surely not a desperate age ;
 'Tis even too young to be unplum'd into
 That tame domestic creature called a Wife,
 And quit the careless pleasures of the world.
 Nay, 'tis not decent at these years to grow
 A sober matron.

STRENI.

How thou ramblest on !—
 But I am old, my child ; I have not long
 To live, not many years ; and 'tis my wish,
 My favourite aim, before I die, to see
 My daughter settled in a solid state
 Of happiness. That done, my rest of life
 Becomes a holiday, that chearful calm
 Which age delights in : and I shall——

A TRAGEDY.

81

SCENE III.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,

There's one just now arrived with some dispatches
He has rode all night to bring you.

STRENI.

I'll see him presently.

Go tell OLYMPIA that this Lady here
Expects her company.

SCENE IV.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

STRENI.

My dear VICTORIA,

I'll leave you to your cousin's entertainment
A little while.

VICTORIA.

I'll go myself and find her.

S C E N E V.

VICTORIA.

Who would believe this good old man, so easy
So gentle otherways, should in this case
Prove so inflexible! But here comes OLYMPIA.—
Alas, how altered!

S C E N E VI.

VICTORIA, OLYMPIA.

VICTORIA.

Ah, my dearest cousin!—
Come, we're alone.

OLYMPIA.

Welcome to my sad heart!—
What need have I of such a cordial fight!

VICTORIA.

Poor dear OLYMPIA!—How catching are thy
tears!—
Thy griefs are mine. Would I could bear them
for thee!

OLYMPIA.

How have I long'd to see my only friend,

A TRAGEDY.

83

My kind companion!—Now she comes to late;
For I'm undone for ever!

VICTORIA.

It must not be:
All is not lost yet.—Bless me! thy hands burn
mine—
Thou art not well.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! did you know, VICTORIA,
What I have suffered since we parted last,
You'd wonder that this mortal frame so long
Could bear such misery.

VICTORIA.

Come, dry thy tears.
The worst is past —Your father will relent:
He needs must yield at last.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! never, never!—
To-morrow, for ought that yet appears, compleats
My wretchedness.

VICTORIA.

Good Heaven! it must not be.
What! be engaged by force in vows so solemn!
'Tis madness to suppose it.

OLYMPIA.

Either it must be so,
Or I must live an outcast in the world,

84 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

With all my father's curses on my head.—
That's my hard sentence.

VICTORIA.

Never till this moment
Have I once dream'd what happiness it was
To own a little fortune uncontroll'd
By any human caprice.—'Tis thine, OLYMPIA!
Heavens! We shall be the happiest two that live!—
I say 'tis thine!

OLYMPIA.

My generous kind VICTORIA!
But can I bear my father's fix'd displeasure?—
Tho' to my daily grief I have found of late
His tenderness estrang'd, I am not yet
So harden'd with unkindness to endure
To lose his smiles for ever.

VICTORIA.

That fear is vain.
Your father is not of so stern a make.
He cannot tear you from his heart; in him
Nature defies it: this severity
Is but put on, and costs him many a pang,
No doubt, to urge you to what he conceives
Your greatest happiness.—But I long, OLYMPIA,
To hear the whole of thy disastrous tale.
For this long absence of two years, while all
Intelligence has been shut up between us,
Has kept us still in painful ignorance

Of what has past. The general part indeed
 I know too well; but for particulars
 All I have learnt is merely from report;
 Whose specious lies discredit every truth
 It chances to throw out. I left you blest
 In the gay spring of love. A view more charming
 Of all that's sweet in th' harmony of souls
 Was never seen: your father too then seem'd
 To hold ALPHONSO as his own; as one
 Soon to become his son-in-law.

OLYMPIA.

'Tis true:

And till my father had disclosed his mind,
 To give a sanction to ALPHONSO's vows;
 What tendernefs possess'd my soul,
 I let it fondly prey upon itself;
 My eyes ne'er told it, and much less my tongue.
 I hid my conscious blushes as I could,
 My fault'ring speech was virgin bashfulness,
 And if I trembled 'twas alarm, not love.
 Oh! I could burst, and on thy friendly bosom
 Breathe out my soul, VICTORIA, to remember
 The dear enchantments of those happy days!
 It was a sweet disease, a charming dream,
 And but a dream, of happiness. At last
 We were contracted by the mutual will
 Of both our parents; and a distant day
 Fix'd for the nuptials; when, alas!—

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86 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

I know

This CLAUDIO saw you ; this rich Count : would he
And all his millions in a mine had been
Blown to the Moon, that luckless hour he came
Blundering to blast such hopeful buds of joy !
How I could curse him !—But my dear OLYMPIA,
I interrupt your story.

OLYMPIA.

Alas ! my father,

Dazzled with CLAUDIO's wealth, and by his arts
Of most immoderate shameless flattery won,
Grew cold to poor ALPHONSO ; by degrees
Chang'd his familiar cordial entertainment
To dry civility, and shocking ceremony :
Seized every opportunity to lessen him
In my affections, and to recommend
A stranger to my breast. 'Twas all in vain.
How could I hear him ? Was it possible
To shift the pure devotion of my heart
From lov'd ALPHONSO to a golden idol ?
Nay, to th' old object of ALPHONSO's hate ?—
I own I ne'er attempted it. But from
That adverse time the fortune of our loves
Has still declined ; and (strange fatality !)
Soon after this another cross event
Confirm'd the former.—

A TRAGEDY.

87

VICTORIA.

How?

OLYMPIA.

One night at court,
In the full splendour of a birth-day crowd,
A vain pert fool, a minion of the King's,
A coxcomb drunk with favour, snatch'd my hand
And rudely kiss'd it; such confusion seiz'd me
I had almost funk: ALPHONSO, who was by,
Forgetful of the reverence of the place
And the King's presence, with one desperate blow
Laid the plum'd courtier sprawling on the floor:
And for that hasty generous fault was banished
From Naples to Palermo, for a twelvemonth.

VICTORIA.

Banish'd! Heaven's patience! Had he fail'd to do
He had merited eternal banishment; [it,
From Naples, Italy, from every land,
From all society where honour's thought of.
Had I been King, th' ill-manner'd fool who gave
The first offence, and brought the other on,
(Which was at worst a noble rashness) should
Have bore the punishment alone.

OLYMPIA.

The King,
On due submissions offered by ALPHONSO,
'Tis thought would freely have revoked the sen-
But for the secret practices of some [tence,

89 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Who wish'd his absence. Those dark dealings
 All intercession vain; tho' for my sake [made
 He stoop'd to more than, otherwise, I know,
 His generous pride would have consented to.—
 No remedy: he must depart, and leave me
 A widowed bride; tho' first he press'd the nuptials,
 He claimed my hand: that was denied; my father
 Found some prudential reasons to excuse it
 Till his return. ALPHONSO warmly urged
 A private marriage: this my filial duty
 Forbade; tho' else, with all my soul, I would
 Have been the partner of his banishment,
 Not to Palermo, but to any desert,
 To Nature's wildest solitudes; I owed it,
 Could ought be dismal where ALPHONSO was,
 To him who owed his banishment to me.
 It was a mournful parting: one sad year
 Appeared an age; and till that age expired
 Our only view of consolation was
 Such intercourse as separates from the dead
 Our absent friends.—But since that cruel day
 Not one short letter——

VICTORIA.

How? That's strange, OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

'Tis no such wonder. For this generous exile,
 The hardly-used ALPHONSO, scarce had left
 The gates of Naples, when my father hurried me

Down to these ancient melancholy walls,
Remote from Naples and all neighbourhood.
The real aim of this retreat, as from
Th' event appears too plain, was to cut off
All correspondence with ALPHONSO, and those
That might promote intelligence between us;
While this insidious rival should be favoured
With all advantages to undermine
My absent love. For ever since I have known
This sad retirement, this confinement rather,
My correspondence has been strictly watched
Like one in goal for treason. No company
This twelvemonth have I seen but CLAUDIO,
And those who with his odious praises chafe
My persecuted ears. I have been afraid
Of every morning's light; for every day
Has seen me flattered, threatened and cajoled,
Tortured and teized, to what I most abhor.
What's worse than these, strange fancies haunt my
mind,
And jealous cares pursue me, that my breast
Pants with perpetual terrors and alarms.
My health in sickly languor pines away:
Kind sleep forsakes me; and when harrafs'd Na-
Sinks in imperfect rest, distracted dreams, [ture
Worse than my waking miseries, shake me from
My frighted slumbers. Gracious Heaven defend
me!

90 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

'Tis horrible to think how near the verge
Of madness I have been.

VICTORIA.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

What blasts have shook thy gentle soul! But
Heaven

And thine own fortitude will support thee
To baffle all their rage.

OLYMPIA.

My fortitude!

Alas! my little share of that, VICTORIA,
Has failed me already; fatally has failed me.
For tired with endless teizing, glad to gain
Some respite from the present pain, at last
I promised in the weakness of my mind,
That if within three days beyond the term
In which ALPHONSO's banishment expir'd,
He did not claim my plighted faith, I should
Resign my hand to CLAUDIO. This I thought
Was no great venture. For tho' no letters came,
I hoped I knew the cause; nor would I doubt
ALPHONSO's faith, and purpose not to lose
One day of liberty in absence from me;
These I remember were his words at parting.
But, ah VICTORIA! would that doleful year
Was yet not ended, that I still might hope!

VICTORIA.

Is it then past?

A TRAGEDY.

91

OLYMPIA.

Two days since : and to-morrow
Decides my destiny.

VICTORIA.

But is there ought
In this, that at his father's instigation
ALPHONSO has commenced a nuptial treaty
With a Sicilian Lady?

OLYMPIA.

Such a rumour
Has, since that promise was extorted from me,
Been so industriously rung in my ears,
And managed with such arts and aggravations,
It seemed, when the first shock was past, a fiction
Contriv'd to shake my faith, and drive me in
A hurry of resentment to my ruin.
But by your looks you seem to apprehend
'Tis something more—Perhaps you've heard he's
married.

For heaven's sake do not flatter me, VICTORIA.
If it is so tell me.——Ah!

VICTORIA.

Nay, dear OLYMPIA,
I tell you all I have heard ; and that perhaps
Comes from the secret fountain-head of lies.
At least if such a treaty was confirmed
You might expect the earliest notice of it.
My life for't your intelligence in that

92 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Would pass without much barr or scrutiny.

OLYMPIA.

That's all my little comfort. But alas!
I know not what to think of this delay.
Sometimes my melancholy whispers me
He has forgot or hates me, and in revenge of
My father's flights has left me. At other times
That probity, that unaffected warmth
Of love unchanged by shocking injuries;
Those generous manners, th' inviolable honour
Which even his enemies admit, assure me
He cannot be so base to quit me thus,
Without some form at least of taking leave.
Perhaps he has heard I'm married, and believes it;
Perhaps he is not well.—I'm all perplexity.
This agony of suspense is perfect torture,
From which, to know that fate had done its worst
Would be a kind of desperate repose.—
Should he prove faithless, I have done, VICTORIA,
What you'll despise me for.

VICTORIA.

It cannot be.

You ne'er can stoop to ought that's really mean:
But what, dear cousin?

OLYMPIA.

As the time approach'd
Which was to prove decisive of my fortune,
My fears encreased; my anxious throbbings grew

Quite insupportable; my fluttering breast
 Could find no quiet. My restless brain at work
 How to prevent the worst, at last I found
 A trusty messenger to bear with speed
 A letter to ALPHONSO; which explained
 Whate'er was needful of my sufferings past
 And fears of worse to come; and that if still
 He loved and mean to claim me, the least delay
 Might render that impossible. Ere this
 I might have had some answer; but no news
 Arriving, in despair last night I sought
 Protection in a monastery that stands
 Amongst the neighbouring mountains: there I past
 The anxious night! but thither traced, this morn-
 I was demanded by the authority of [ing
 My father in his vassals.

VICTORIA.

But the sisters,
 The Abbess, Heaven! how could they yield you
 So tamely?—their protection! [up

OLYMPIA.

Do not blame them;
 They did their utmost for me. I was received
 With manners most respectfully obliging,
 With tears of sympathy, and fluttering care
 To hide me painting from the hot pursuit.
 But as my sheltering place was soon discovered,
 'Twas more it seems than they could answer for,

94 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

To brave my father's summons.—You see, vic-
TORIA,

How every refuge fails me. A short time now
Remains for me to hope. Yet something still,
Whether the whisperings of some friendly power,
Or the last effort of tenacious hope,
Suggests to my fore mind that ere to-morrow
ALPHONSO will be here. But come what will
I shall not marry CLAUDIO; that's determined.—
I know one refuge from all misery—
One cordial draught shall——

VICTORIA.

What?—Thy words are frightful!—
Heaven banish all such thoughts!—Alas! OLYM-
PIA,

'Thou look'st thro' the false glass of Melancholy.
Trust me there's nothing yet so desperate here.
Whate'er may happen lucklessly, the worst
Is still avoidable.—You shall be sick—
Or take another flight.—We'll fly together.
'I will secure you in a little fortress
Which to the General himself in person
Shall scarce surrender you at the first summons.
There are a thousand shifts; more than we yet
Can think of.—But the time is precious:
Come let us hide ourselves, and plot together.
'Twill be a charming triumph, if we two,
In half a day, at one unlooked for blow,

Can dreadful scenes demolish, which to rear
Has cost much older heads a restless year.

ACT II. SCENE I.

STRENI.

What's to be done? Good God! these news confound me!

I cannot yet believe my eyes. Let me read
This letter again. — There's nothing in the
world

But villainy and delusion: knaves and dupes
Maintain this foolish farce of human life. —
Let me see —

“ I am this moment informed that Count
“ CLAUDIO is accused of some embezzlements and
“ other perfidious practices during the late war,
“ which render him obnoxious to the State; and
“ that warrants are actually issued out to apprehend him. I am sorry this piece of news
“ did not reach me till after my sister VICTORIA'S
“ departure; but hope it will not come too late
“ to prevent your engaging in so fatal an alliance.
“ At least, whether my information prove true
“ or false, I thought myself obliged to give you
“ this notice.” —

M 2

96 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Well, this cuts deep indeed! There all my hopes,
My flattering schemes lie blasted and o'erthrown.
The shock so stuns me that I yet scarce feel it.
Is it so then, CLAUDIO? Well, I find at last
This world is all a cheat, and there's no trusting
To fair appearances.—Would this had happened
A twelvemonth sooner! what an anxious year
It would have saved me and my poor OLYMPIA!
Yet better now than a twelvemonth hence;—nay,
than

To-morrow. — Bless me! how nearly have we
'scaped

The crush of this man's ruin!—It grieves my soul
When I look back on what my child has suffered,
And all for nothing. But, Heaven knows! what-
e'er

Was harshly managed was kindly meant.
I long to lighten of a deadly weight
Her labouring breast, that flutters now with fear
T' approach me, and retards her trembling steps.
Could she but guess the purpose of my message
She'd make more haste to meet me.—But she
comes,

SCENE II.

STRENI, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

I am ashamed to see my father's face:
But prostrate thus and breathless at his feet
I beg forgiveness.

STRENI.

Rise, OLYMPIA. Come,
Indeed it was not well.

OLYMPIA.

'Twas my despair
That did it.—Pardon me, my Lord—my father!

STRENI.

I do, my child, I do. You've never found me
An unrelenting parent: or if ever
I have given way to some austerities,
My very tenderness provoked me to them,
My eager care to see you happy.

OLYMPIA.

My father,
You have been ever gracious, kind and tender;
Your goodness still prevented all my wishes:
And it has cost me many a painful throb
To be reduced, by thwarting obligations,

95 THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

To act a stubborn part against your pleasure.
 I know your purpose is to make me happy:
 But what's all splendor and superfluous wealth,
 What's all the world, to dear content of mind?—
 My heart is not at my command: and yet
 So far I could controul it, that was there one
 Dear as my soul—I never would, without
 My father's sanction, change my vows with his:
 There is but one thing you can urge and I
 Not chearfully yield to. Were your sacred life
 To be redeemed with mine, oh! I should fall
 A willing victim: nothing there could combat
 My filial duty. But to give the hand
 To one while to another the heart's engaged,
 Is something so prophane, it looks so like
 Base prostitution, that the more I think on't
 The more it shocks me.—Still my honoured father,
 Let me implore your grace—'Tis not too late
 To save me from this violation.

STRENI.

My child,

I will no longer to thy delicacy
 Oppose the steadiest purpose of my soul.
 Indeed I'm very sorry to have urg'd so far
 A match that shocks thee. To-morrow is the day
 Thou dreadst so much: but I would rather make
 The greatest power on earth my deadly foe
 Than thee unhappy.

A TRAGEDY. 99

OLYMPIA.

O my gracious father !

Tears so o'erpower me that they choke my words—

But on my knees I thank you.—You're too good !

STRENI.

Come to my heart, my child : thou never wast
A stranger there, nor ever can'st thou be
While it has vital warmth.

OLYMPIA.

My dearest father,
This kindness makes at once a full amends
For all the griefs that I have ever known.—
I am too happy——

A SERVANT.

The Count, my Lord,
Is at the gates.

STRENI.

The Count!—what CLAUDIO?—well—
Conduct him in.—He comes betimes;—before
He was expected.—But—what ails my child—
Thou tremblest and growst pale!—Retire, my
child—

My poor OLYMPIA!—Well, 'tis plain enough
What all this hurry means. But soft and fair,
Good Count! you come no further this way,
Count,
Not one step further. You little know——

S C E N E III.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good morrow,
And many happy days, to good Lord STRENI.

STRENI.

The same to you, Count CLAUDIO.—Who'd believe it!

CLAUDIO.

You cannot wonder that I thus prevent
My happiest day: my love of dear OLYMPIA,
My warm ambition to be stiled your son,
Might well account for that.—But I have news,—
No bad ones neither.—Guess, my Lord.

STRENI.

How should I?—

What mean you?

CLAUDIO.

Only this;—at last 'tis done
What we so long have laboured—ALPHONSO'S
married!

'Tis true—'tis past all doubt—I have sure proofs
on't.

And now OLYMPIA stands absolved from all

Engagements there, which gives me double joy:
For it would damp all happiness to shock
Her scrupulous honour; and indeed that thought
Has always check'd me—What! you're sad, my
Lord.

STRENI.

I have some reason. I am quite heart-sick
Of ineffectual cares. I've done whate'er
Authority or gentle arts could do
To push this backward treaty, but find at last
'Tis all in vain. 'Twill never do, believe me.

CLAUDIO.

How's this, my worthy Lord? you quite amaze
I thought it had been fix'd. [me!

STRENI.

It seem'd so; but
I cannot force my daughter's inclinations.

CLAUDIO.

I hope they are not now less kind to me
Than when the happy day was named.

STRENI.

Indeed,
Not to amuse you with false complaisance,
I think they rather are; for as the day
Draws nearer, her reluctance grows more violent.
I cannot bear to see her agonies.
Could I compel her, as indeed I cannot,
I feel too much compunction in my breast

102 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

To use a power so tyrannous and unjust
Against my child. Nor would it suit your wisdom
To yoke your years with an unwilling bride.
And as your friend, my Lord, I would dissuade
you

From further thoughts of this: extorted vows
Can never tend to happiness.

CLAUDIO.

I hope
I do but dream! If not, your mind, my Lord,
Is strangely altered for the time. These difficul-
ties

Till now have ne'er been thought of. But they're
nothing:

For be affection e'er so coy, 'twill grow
At last with tender cherishing.

STRENI.

But its growth
Will not be forced. Let time and nature work.
Have patience. Let it rest. A short delay
Can breed no danger here. A month or two hence
Will do as well or better.

CLAUDIO.

A month or two!
Heavens! that's an age to one who loves like me!—
No, no,—to-morrow—would it were to-day!

STRENI.

It cannot be to-day—nor yet to-morrow.

A TRAGEDY.

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CLAUDIO.

How! not to-morrow? Ah! by all that's tender
Let me insist on that, my dearest Lord.

STRENI.

Urge me no further.

CLAUDIO.

For your own sake, my Lord,
As well as mine, I must.—How will it sound?
'Tis known——

STRENI.

Suppose ALPHONSO had returned?
You know the terms——

CLAUDIO.

He's married.

STRENI.

I'm sorry for it,

CLAUDIO.

You joke,

STRENI.

Not I,

I'm not so merry.

CLAUDIO.

Sorry!

STRENI.

Yes, I say sorry.

CLAUDIO.

Why?

N 2

104 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

My daughter loved him.
And he's an honest man.

CLAUDIO.

There are many such
I hope, my Lord.

STRENI.

Yes, hundreds who appear such
To one that is.

CLAUDIO.

Good Heaven! What can this mean?—
But some men's favour is a slippery hold.
Not long ago ALPHONSO was dismiss'd
To make me room; now 'tis my turn to yield
To some new favourite. I see it plainly.

STRENI.

I shall not henceforth be too rash in making
New friendships;—that I promise you.

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,
You aim at something; what I know not: but
To one who almost lived upon your smiles,
That angry coyness in your look is death;
And every word you utter is so keen
It stings me to the heart. I could encounter
The rudest malice of indifferent men
With vengeance or contempt. But from the man

I love, and on whose love I built my happiness,
 Unkindness tortures while it wounds.—How have I
 Deserved this? sure some secret foe of mine
 Has been too busy with your ear: for foes
 I have, more than I know of. What little services
 I've done my country are by some repaid
 With envy: but I laugh at that, my Lord.
 To one that's fortified in innocence
 Such bolts are harmless: 'Tis as 'twere to batter
 A fort with snow-balls. Yet it would be kind,
 Nay, 'tis but justice, if malicious tongues
 Have tampered with my name, to let me know
 Of what I stand accused.

STRENI.

You talk like one
 Unconscious of all blame: but boldness is not
 Always the surest test of innocence.

CLAUDIO.

What have I done?

STRENI.

Look backward, and consider.
 Peruse your life a little.

CLAUDIO.

There's nothing there
 I dare not boldly look into. But what,
 My Lord, does all this tend to?

106 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

Have you nothing
To settle with the state?—

CLAUDIO.

To settle!—yes—
The state is in my debt.

STRENI.

But has the state
No claim on you?

CLAUDIO.

For nothing but my services
Whene'er it needs them.

STRENI.

Are you sure of that?

CLAUDIO.

As sure as that I live.

STRENI.

All-conscious Heaven!

Was ever such effrontery known!—D'ye think
We've no intelligence here? Or can you be
So ignorant of the dreadful storm that hangs
Ready to burst upon your head? is 't possible
You should not know how dear a reckoning, what
A bloody one perhaps, you have to pay?
For what, you best should guess.—Infatuate man!
Away!—There is no safety here!—Fly quickly!—
There is no ground where Naples has command

E,
Can shelter you!—You're mad to stay one moment!—

The blood-hounds of the state are at your heels!—
Away, and hide yourself betimes!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! ha!

STRENI.

You laugh!—(He's surely mad!)

CLAUDIO.

Indeed I do,

To see the bottom of this fearful mystery.

'Tis well no wounded conscience watches here

To cry out Guilty when another's crimes

Burst out. There's here a small mistake, my
Lord;

Only one CLAUDIO for another; that's all.—

Ha! ha!

STRENI.

What other CLAUDIO?

CLAUDIO.

You have seen him.

A distant kinsman of my own, and tho'

He has hurt me in the tenderest point I pity him.

'Twas I that raised him to a place of trust,

Because I thought him honest; and, for some
time,

So blind is friendship, I neglected all

108 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Reports to his discredit, as the blasts
Of envy; till at last some flagrant acts
Appeared.—I never was so angry; never
Perhaps but then have I rebuked with rancour.
Yet on his promise to offend no more
He was continued. But it seems th' effect
Of all my friendly warnings, all my threats,
And weak mistaken lenity at last,
Was only this, to put him on his guard,
And make him a more politic knave. But now
He is in hands will strip him of his spoils,
And squeeze the inmost marrow from his bones.
For, if 'tis true what I have heard, by this
He's prisoner to the state.

STRENI.

(What shall I think?)—

This is a strange mistake; and if indeed,
It be no more, I'm glad on't for the sake
Of one I am so loath to judge of harshly.
But on your honour pardon me, good Count,
Is there no more than this?

CLAUDIO.

D'ye doubt my word?—

What should I gain by such a falsehood?—I
Who see no luxury in simple lying?
Were I th' obnoxious wretch you take me for
My mind had hardly been employed to-day
In nuptial thoughts; nor should my presence here

Have shock'd good STRENI. Look upon my face;
Is there ought there or in my whole behaviour
That shews like guilt? Heavens! can I be so mon-
So madly wicked, so absurd a villain, [strous
For such I must be, to involve my friends,
Those whom I love most, one whom I adore,
In my perdition?—But if you doubt me still,
With all my heart here let us stop, my Lord,
Till every straw suspicion stumbles at
Be swept away. Inform yourself; be cautious;
Do nothing rashly. And, my Lord, to shew you
How dearly I regard your satisfaction;
Let us, that you may weigh it at full leisure,
Adjourn this marriage; not for a month or two,
But for a year or two, or three, or seven,—
Or, if you please, for ever. Heaven forbid
I should engage you in my bankruptcy!—
Good God defend me!—So, farewell, my Lord—
My servants there—

STRENI.

Come; not so hot, my Count.
A word or two before you go. Let's part
Like friends at least.

CLAUDIO.

Where friendship is so ticklish
The sooner done the better. I'm heart-sick
Of hot and cold friends: they never quit the pains
It costs to manage them. Farewel!

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STRENI.

Yet hear me.—

I'm sorry, CLAUDIO; I am quite confounded
For this mistake. But the report was aimed
At you so very plainly, that your brother
Must have believed it. 'Tis not in my nature,
Old as I am, to be suspicious.
But where the welfare of my only child,
Her happiness of life depends, to scruple
Is no offence I hope; at least I'm sure
I meant you none. In proof of which, demand
My utmost power to serve you.

CLAUDIO.

Ah STRENI! STRENI!

You know me but too well. I am a child
To you; mere wax, you mould me at your pleasure:
You wound and heal me. Were I less your slave,
And less enamoured, this unkind behaviour
Had rid me of those chains which I prefer
To freedom—love and friendship.

STRENI.

Come, forgive

An old man's spleen; forget it. And to prove
How little apt I am to keep impressions
To CLAUDIO's disadvantage; every art
I have, and all my power, shall be employed
To hasten on these nuptials.—But is it certain,

A TRAGEDY.

III

This marriage of ALPHONSO? make that appear,
And the main obstacle's removed.

CLAUDIO.

I met a gentleman, you know him; STURIO;
You have seen him with ALPHONSO: he comes on
business

Post-haste from Sicily. The night before
He left Palermo was, he says, the eve of
ALPHONSO's wedding, which his haste alone
Excused him from attending. 'Tis like he brings
Some message hither; for he said, this morning
He should be here. I thought to have found him
here

Before me; but he'll soon appear, I doubt not,
And certify his news.

STRENI.

Well, let him come.

He comes with no intelligence to retard
Our purpose.—Shall I leave you, CLAUDIO, here
Till I prepare OLYMPIA for such news
As rashly told might hurt her?

CLAUDIO.

By all means.

STRENI.

You'll follow presently?

CLAUDIO.

I will, my Lord,

112 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

S C E N E IV.

CLAUDIO.

What am I doing? 'Tis almost a crime
To work on this good man's credulity thus.
But the great principle which rules us all,
The care that quits us not even in despair,
Is love of self.—Self-preservation never
Can be unjust. If this succeed, his credit
And interest with the state may clear me. Nothing,
Nothing but that can do it. But we must
Dispatch: this crazy fabric of my fortune
Totters at every step of stealing time.——
But then to be reproached and baited for
Diffimulation!—Who can prove that?—None.
Was I obliged to know what sacred trains
Were laid to blow my envied grandeur up?—
Not I. There's something in STRENI's carriage
To justify a little double dealing.
He has not used me quite ingenuously;
And far from kindly. Interest is his God,
As well as that of other—honest men.
So far all's fair, we're on an equal footing.—
Well——
This is the most convenient cousin!—CLAUDIO,
I thank you for this seasonable help.

Would I could serve you in my turn! But that's
Too late; your doom is certain: mine comes next
To be determined; to my loss or not
I dare not guess.—But flourish I or fall,
'Tis still some satisfaction to have crush'd
The eager hopes of this impetuous youth.
Dupe of fair words, and smiles, and shrugs, AL-

PHONSO,

You have forgot, I do believe, but I
Shall still remember, with what haughtiness
You faced me when a younger Officer
O'erstrode you once. Was I to blame? He knew
The art of speaking to the palm; and was
A docile boy, as stupid as you please,
And not too apt to rouse much jealousy.
These are the men best fitted for promotion
In every rank of life.—But now to OLYMPIA.
Now help me, Flattery!—Flattery! She deserves
All praise; such excellence could not find its match
The men of this age: yet she must be mine; [in
And soon, or never. Hence then all delay;
My fate depends on this important day.

114 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

ACT III. SCENE I.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Come, cousin, you may breathe here freely; come,
There floats no fulsome incense here. You need
Fresh air; a tempest were almost too little
To fan this musky cloud of flattery off.
Foh! Such a stench of perfume suffocates worse
Than a volcano's mouth. Heaven! what a
tongue!

I do believe the Devil inspires him. Bless me!
With what a face of plain sincerity,
With what a serious confidence, he throws out
The most extravagant flatteries! How they work
On your hard heart I know not: but for me,
I feel so tickled with my share, God knows,
I shall not sleep these three nights.

OLYMPIA.

Ah, VICTORIA!

Was ever one so wretched?

VICTORIA.

To be teized thus
Indeed is most vexatious. But an hour,

'Tis hardly more, since from the middle gloom of
A long tempestuous night, a sudden blaze
Like noon burst out, almost with shocking bright-
ness.

It smiled a while, enchantingly it smiled,
And promised balmy climes and happy shores :
Then, like a dream of th' air, this gaudy meteor,
This phantom of a fun, dissolved itself
Into the waste of darkness.

OLYMPIA.

Ah me! VICTORIA!

What shall I do?

VICTORIA.

Be firm, and never yield.
You're in the right, and cannot be too obstinate.
Be constant still; a little struggling more
Will end this strife.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas! all's over.

VICTORIA.

All's over! How my dear? I say keep firm.
Why this despondence? recollect yourself.
Have you, good Heaven! forgot your father's
promise,
So lately made? his unexpected promise,
So voluntarily made? Insist on that.
Never forsake yourself, my dear OLYMPIA.
Abide inflexibly by that.

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OLYMPIA.

Alas!

You come not near my grief.

VICTORIA.

I guess it. But

There's something yet more shocking than the
loss of

A faithless lover. What you may avoid;
And will I hope.

OLYMPIA.

Sure you have never loved.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, would you have me whine?
And with an ill-timed sympathy indulge
A mind already too much softened, when
Th' occasion calls for fortitude and spirit?
One effort more—fear nothing—the steady mind
O'er-matches fate itself.—

OLYMPIA.

My fate approaches.

Ah, my VICTORIA!—You heard the news?

VICTORIA.

I did.

OLYMPIA.

Do you believe it? May it not be false still?
Tell me sincerely what you think.

VICTORIA.

'Tis hard
To judge; a little time will shew it.

OLYMPIA.

But

May it not possibly enough be false?
It comes from a suspicious hand. A falsehood
Believ'd for e'er so short a time may speed
A wicked purpose; and this art they say [ger
The cunning often practise.—Besides, this messen-
Appears not yet; 'tis noon too.—Ah VICTORIA!
Is there not room to hope still?

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA!

I would suppose the worst in doubtful cases.
For better mortify a little needlessly,
Than meet misfortune unprepared.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!

I am my own impostor. Strange, that misery
Should flatter thus itself! Why dare I not
Resolve at once to look upon my fate?

A SERVANT.

Madam, a Gentleman, one Signior STURIO,
Begs at your leisure to attend you.

OLYMPIA.

STURIO!—

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118 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Well shew him in—STURIO you said? Good Heaven!

What shall I do, VICTORIA!—Stay—I'm busy. Excuse me to him.—Tell him—by and by I shall be glad to see him. When I ring, You may conduct him hither.

Ah VICTORIA! [*Sitting down hastily.*]

What shall I do?

I cannot see this man: [*Rising.*]

This beating at the heart makes it impossible—
I pant for breath—I shall not have the power
To speak one word.—Ah me!

VICTORIA.

Dearest OLYMPIA!

Yield not to this alarm. Recover yourself.
This flutter cannot last.

OLYMPIA.

Must I be seen

In this confusion? It must not be—I will not.
It is not fit I should.—Pray might not you
Receive this visit for me? Do, dear cousin.
Say I am sick, or whimsical, or mad;
Say any thing, and let me hide myself.

VICTORIA.

Stay, dear OLYMPIA. Come: it cannot be.
You cannot now with honour to yourself
Avoid this interview. Come, come, be firm.
'Twill soon be over. Were the case my own,

A TRAGEDY. 119

I think I should with most contemptuous coolness
Receive the last leave of a faithless man.

What should you fear who know the worst already?

Let indignation shake this tim'rous fit off;

And shew yourself superior to the loss

Of one not worth the keeping. Come, you can;

I know, I'm sure, you can.

OLYMPIA.

I am ashamed

Of this base weakness. — Well, what must be
must be. [Rings.]

Now, Heaven support me!

VICTORIA.

Never fear. The fit

Goes off: and what alarms you now, my dearest,

You will hereafter laugh at. — Shall I leave you?

OLYMPIA.

No, stay. — He comes. — Ah!

VICTORIA.

Let him. He's more afraid

Than you.

S C E N E II.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STURIO.

STURIO.

All happiness to Lady OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

You're welcome, Sir, from Sicily.—Pray sit, Sir.
I'm glad to see you; you're a mighty stranger.
We have not seen you I'm sure almost these two
years.

How like you Sicily, Sir? They say it is
A most enchanting spot.

STURIO.

A Paradise, Madam.

OLYMPIA.

They say so. Pray what news there, Sir? I hope
You left all friends well, and—amongst the rest
How does your friend ALPHONSO?

STURIO.

Madam, I left him well.

OLYMPIA.

We're told he has altered his condition lately.—
He's married?—Is he not?—This Lady, Sir,

My friend, may know whate'er belongs to me.
He's married?—

STURIO.

Madam——

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wish him joy
With all my heart. I hope 'tis happily.
The Lady—you have seen her?

STURIO.

Often, Madam.

CASERTA's daughter: not a first-rate beauty,
Nor yet quite homely.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wish them happy
With all my soul.—No other news, Sir?

STURIO.

None. But

This letter, Madam, parting from ALPHONSO,
I promised to deliver.——Pardon me
Th' abruptness of this hurry: business calls me:
And what more time I have to spare at present
Lord STRENI claims. Madam, may all that's
Ever attend you. [good

OLYMPIA.

I thank you, Sir. Farewell.—

S C E N E II.

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Ever attend you. [good

OLYMPIA.

I thank you, Sir. Farewell.—

SCENE III.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! ah! VICTORIA! [*Throwing herself into a chair.*]

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA, patience!——
What shall I do?—When I should comfort her
I weep myself.—My dear OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

Ah me!

VICTORIA.

This desperate grief will kill her.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! Oh! Oh!

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, let us not indulge
This weakness of our spirit.—Come, my dearest,
Come rouse yourself.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas! VICTORIA!—

Do not despise me.

A TRAGEDY.

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VICTORIA.

Nay, my dear, this weakness
Has nothing shameful in it. As it shews
A delicate mind, it is a beauty rather;
And only grows a fault and a misfortune
By too much yielding to it.

OLYMPIA.

Ah, VICTORIA!—

I am so humbled with repeated shocks
That my tame spirit sinks beneath its wrongs.—
But for this letter—I am blind with weeping—
Read it, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Burn it.

OLYMPIA.

Read it first.

VICTORIA.

“ Madam, in spite of all your neglects I have
“ prevailed upon myself to write to you once
“ more, that you may know I have temper e-
“ nough to forgive them. I am not so selfish as
“ to disapprove of your choice; it is perfectly
“ prudent; for wealth you know is the great
“ support of female pride: vanity I should say,
“ for pride is too noble a name for it. I
“ wish you joy of your Count; there is one no-
“ ble quality attends him—he is rich. But if he

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“ ever dares appear where I am, were he twenty
 “ times your husband, I shall take the liberty to
 “ put him in mind of some other qualities I have
 “ discovered in him. In the mean time I am so
 “ far from reproaching you with inconstancy,
 “ that I thank you for having shewn it before it
 “ could essentially hurt me. I am following your
 “ example, and shall forget all former attach-
 “ ments as fast as I can. It is what I owe in
 “ justice to myself, and to one of your sex who
 “ deserves all my love and esteem. Farewell,
 “ OLYMPIA! You are not what I thought you
 “ once. But may Heaven rain gold upon you!
 “ So prays the forgiving, though monstrously
 “ abused ALPHONSO.”

OLYMPIA.

What does he say? [Snatching the letter.]

VICTORIA.

Cousin, I give your joy
 Of this deliverance from one worthless man.

OLYMPIA.

What does he say?—*All my neglects*—that’s well.
 He has *prevailed upon himself*—’Tis much
 So great a spirit should condescend so far
 As to abuse me!—*I have temper enough*—
 Yes temper! surely—*To forgive you*, that’s plea-
 sant—

’Tis pity you should have reason to forgive me

Your choice is perfectly prudent—Fool! what choice?

The only choice I ever made was a wrong one,
And I'm ashamed of 't—Thank Heaven I've mis-
Choice!— [fed it!—

What's this he talks

Of wealth—of female pride, and vanity?—

Such rambling stuff!—he's mad! the man's dis-
tracted!

You *wish me joy*. Heaven mend your crazy head!
Did you ever hear the like?

VICTORIA.

'Tis an original.

OLYMPIA.

But if ever he dares appear, etc.

How well he counterfeits anger, and plays the
bully!

But here's a stroke worth all the rest—*I am so far
From reproaching you with inconstancy, etc.*

—*Before it could essentially hurt me—*

What does he mean? There is no bearing this!

Base foul-mouthed perjured traitor, have you the
face

Thus to abuse me, whose only fault to you
Was too much constancy? I'm well repaid
For all the griefs my foolish constancy
Has cost me!—Am I not, VICTORIA?

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VICTORIA.

Curse him!

He is not worth your anger.

I am following your example—

Good again!—*and shall forget—forget*
Me! by all means do. *In justice to one*
Of your sex who deserves all my love and
Esteem——

That she may do without deserving much.—

You are not what I thought you once—

No more are you—May Heaven

Rain all its plagues upon me, if you dwell

A moment longer here—Thus, thus I tear

The villain from my heart. 'Tis done at once.—

There, there—thou art no more.

[Tearing the letter.]

VICTORIA.

Who talks of want

Of spirit? How this haughtiness becomes thee!

This indignation's charming.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm cured

Of one great folly. How light my heart feels
from

A villainous guest that sat like lead upon it!

My spirit mounts again. Believe me, cousin,

I'm glad of this man's baseness; I enjoy it:

There's luxury in it. I do not entertain

A wish so tame as that he had proved unalterable.
'Tis better as it is. It feeds my spite
Voluptuously to find him such a villain.
I wish he knew how heartily I scorn him!
How thoroughly I detest him!—He shall know it.
I'll make him feel it.—

VICTORIA.

Your absolute neglect,
As if such things had never past, will gall him.
'Twill be the finest vengeance! Cool neglect,
If there is pride in him, will humble him more
Than fifty thousand spiteful offices.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! that mean letter? I could tear myself.
I wish the palsy had seized this hand before
It did me such disgrace.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA,
Ne'er let that hurt you. You did but what was
honourable.
Were it to do again you should.—It leaves
His baseness no excuse.

OLYMPIA.

Pray, when this message came,
How did I look, VICTORIA? tell me plainly.
Did I seem violently shocked?

128 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

By no means.

OLYMPIA.

Look'd I not flush'd and pale by turns? No signs
Of wildness or disorder?

VICTORIA.

None that he could perceive,

OLYMPIA.

Did I not falter in my speech a little?

VICTORIA.

Not more than I do now.

OLYMPIA.

Nor tremble?

VICTORIA.

No,

Thou didst behave with so composed a grace
I could have hugg'd thee.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm glad of this.

And now, VICTORIA, I shall shew this false one
How slightly I regard him. I have the means
To shew him instantly 'twas honour, more
Than ill-directed love, that made me stand
So long and close a siege; made me hold out
To disobedience, almost to rebellion,
Against my father's threats, his warm intreaties,
Against his wiser choice, My honour now

Abfolved, I cannot be too paffive to
My filial duty.

VICTORIA.

What doft thou mean, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

To mortify a villain's infolence.

VICTORIA.

But how?

OLYMPIA.

By giving my rejected vows to
The man he hates; whom for his fake I fcorned;
Whom now I love becaufe I know he hates him.
Yes, I will give his mortal foe my hand.—
By heaven, I will!

VICTORIA.

You will! indeed not you.

OLYMPIA.

Then, if I do not, may the——

130 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

SCENE IV.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STRENI.

STRENI.

Well, OLYMPIA.

You cannot doubt it now? The truth appears
At last. You see, what happens every day,
The fickleness of youthful vows: despise it;
The dignity of your sex demands it of you.
Laugh at it.

OLYMPIA.

Nay, my Lord, I have forget it.
There is but one reflection stings me now.
I have, against my nature, stubbornly
Opposed my father's will, his just command.
Most heartily I repent it; and I hope
Your goodness will forgive a crime which honour
Betrayed me to. My honour disengaged,
I have no will but yours.

STRENI.

There spoke my daughter!
My will, my pleasure is to see you happy.
'Tis that engrosses all my cares; for that
Have I so steadily withstood your tears,
And made the weakness of affection yield
To rigid reason. Now th' auspicious hour

Appears; and not to dally needlessly
With time, what must be done to-morrow may
As well be done to-day. Nay were it only
For triumph's sake, to make as light of love
As the most fickle boy, the sooner the better.
This very day—

OLYMPIA.

This moment!

VICTORIA.

Hold, OLYMPIA!

STRENI.

Hold you, VICTORIA!

VICTORIA.

No: I will not hold.

Shall I, my Lord, when hurried by despair
My friend would plunge into the boiling deep,
Look calmly on, and cry well done; 'tis right;
This world is not for you; destroy yourself;
And do it bravely, as becomes your spirit?—
But this is worse. Death ends all human woes:
But this is launching a weak slender bark
Into a sea of sorrows.

STRENI.

Pray, good madam,

None of your rhetoric.

VICTORIA.

I affect not rhetoric.

'Tis truth.

132 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

'Tis false.

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I should be grieved
To see the trial hazarded.—OLYMPIA!
You're going in a sudden fit of spleen
To throw yourself away. ALPHONSO has done it.
But disagreeable ties fit not so heavy
On his as on our sex. Yet he's unhappy:
Self-ruined, blindly hurried to his fate.
For he has married from mere pique, I'm positive;
And loves you still. That angry letter shews it.

OLYMPIA.

Love me! Ne'er name him more: it shocks me.

VICTORIA.

Cousin,

Is't possible a little passing gust
Of spleen should drive you to devote your life
To eternal discontent? To wed the man
You cannot love—whom you despise?—Good
Heaven!

The moment that you cool you'll give the world
To have the deed undone.

STRENI.

This is intolerable!

VICTORIA, you're too busy, much too busy.
Meddle not here, I charge you. Mind your own
Affairs.

VICTORIA.

My friend's are mine. Pray, good my Lord,
What interest of my own have I to meddle?
'Tis neither vanity nor love of brawls,
I'm sure, that makes me busy. But is this
A time for tame implicit complaisance?
Can I sit still, and silently approve,
When those I love are bent on desperate deeds?
Call me officious and impertinent,
As many meddlers as you chuse, I care not.
For be as angry as you please, at least
I will discharge my mind.

STRENI.

You're mad, you're mad.—
You're mad, I tell you.

VICTORIA.

'T may be.—But dear OLYMPIA,
Why will you hurry on a change, at best
So awful; here most certainly so fatal?

OLYMPIA.

It is my father's will.

VICTORIA!

Your father is
Too good to exact obedience here, against
Your inclination. 'Tis not very long since
He told you so.

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134 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

Good God! what must I bear?
Is this exaction? Bless me! is it not
Her own free choice!—Pray, is it not, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

Alas! my father!—

STRENI.

What would thou say?

OLYMPIA.

Forgive
My wavering mind. I want not to retract
My hasty promise. Only give me time,
A little time, till old impressions die;
That I may yield a more devoted heart,
A heart more worthy of a good man's vows.

STRENI.

Heaven's curse on all romance! You've learnt,

OLYMPIA,

A delicacy foreign to this world.
You will, in spite of plain good sense, refine
Yourself into a fool. How many matches,
And happy matches too, had ne'er been made,
Were all your sex as scrupulous as you are.
But you're so fickle, now you say this moment,
And now next year.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! it was my rashness.

I hope my father will not urge against me
What passion tortured from me.

STRENI.

Who can bear this?

By Heaven I shall run mad!—To have a daughter
So obstinate against her father's will!
Against her own good fortune!—Gracious
Heaven!

Why did you curse me with a stubborn child?
I have but one, and she's——

VICTORIA.

Dear good my Lord,

Why all this heat? OLYMPIA knows her duty;
And only begs a little time—

STRENI.

To shuffle.

I'll have no more of that. I have too long
Indulg'd her squeamish humour: but I will not
Be longer trifled with in this, depend on't.
And if she is my daughter; if I live,
This day shall make her, what she ought to wish,
Count CLAUDIO's wife: this very hour shall do it.
By Heaven it shall.

VICTORIA.

But why to-day, my Lord?
Why should it be so sudden?

136 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

'Tis my pleasure,
I'll have it so. Let me alone; I know sure
What I am doing.

VICTORIA.

Yet hear me, good my Lord—

STRENI.

No more! I would not have you waste your
breath.

'Tis fix'd; and may I never taste of bliss
If ought shall shake me.

VICTORIA.

O Heaven!—

OLYMPIA.

Cousin, forbear.—

Pardon it, father, to my perverse fate
That I've e'er combated your sacred will.
'Tis but in this I e'er could hesitate
At one command of yours. You are determined;
And were it to my ruin, I obey.
I've nothing more to plead.

STRENI.

My dearest child,
Not to thy ruin; Heaven forbid! I lead thee
To honour, happiness, establish'd bliss.
Thou soon shalt be the envy of thy sex,
And I the happiest father Heaven e'er smil'd on.

Come; let us go, and seize the prosperous hour;
No dallying now, while fortune's in our power.

VICTORIA.

Alas! alas! what fortune I foresee
In this, is black, and ends in misery.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ALPHONSO.

Married! Then what a wretch art thou, AL-
PHONSO?

Just married—Fates, I am your daily sport.
Born to be wretched, all my life has been
A train of strange mischances. Married! and to
My most detested foe!—Death! must this be?
It shall not, were all hell in arms to guard
This imp of treachery. My quick revenge
Shall burst this fiend-tied most unnatural knot,
And make all villains quake—

A SERVANT.

My Lady, Sir,
The Countess will attend you.

ALPHONSO.

'Tis well. I thank you.—

138 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

The Countess! Vengeance! Oh I shall run mad!—

My fluttering heart! She comes! I caught a glimpse

That charms and tortures me.

S C E N E II.

ALPHONSO, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Who's this? defend me!

What are you?

ALPHONSO.

Need I tell my name, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

I have no business with your name nor you,
What brought you hither?—

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA, hear me.—

OLYMPIA.

I'm not at leisure.—

ALPHONSO.

But, we part not so,

I will be heard

A TRAGEDY.

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OLYMPIA.

Prefumptuous! are you mad?

Let go my hand.

ALPHONSO.

'Twas mine—till fate and you—

OLYMPIA.

Yours!—Never!—'Twas not fate but I that gave
And my heart with it, to a man ten times [it,
Your worth. It was my voluntary deed.
I gave it to——

ALPHONSO.

A villain.

OLYMPIA.

Tell him so.

ALPHONSO.

I will; ne'er doubt it: what should hinder me?

OLYMPIA.

You will? I like your manners, to abuse
My husband to my face.

ALPHONSO.

Your husband! plagues!
A knave that should be married to the wheel.—
And you to call him husband!

OLYMPIA.

I'm not used

'T exchange high speeches with the mad. Go,
leave me,

140 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

And keep your head-cool.—Good God! I cannot think

What brought you here. How! leave your bride so soon!—

I've had a lucky miss.

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

How you mistake!

OLYMPIA.

In what?

ALPHONSO.

Both you and I

Are monstrously abused; the meereft dupes

That artful villainy and capricious fate

Ever combined to laugh at.

OLYMPIA.

How?

ALPHONSO.

Good God!

Can you imagine, were I so engaged

As you conceive, I should so far depart

From all propriety as this day to stun you

With impertinent complaints?

OLYMPIA.

O Heaven! what mean you?

ALPHONSO.

While you remain thus ignorant of the truth,

My conscious honour so forsakes me, that

I deem myself the traitor you suppose me.

But know, OLYMPIA——

OLYMPIA.

What?

ALPHONSO.

There never was
A heart more true to tenderness than mine.
'Twas your's, 'tis your's; you reign unrivaled
there;
You ever did, and ever shall: I scorn
All other vows.

OLYMPIA.

Bless me! you rave indeed.
This is strange talk for a new-married man!

ALPHONSO.

You will not understand me, dear OLYMPIA—
I am not married.

OLYMPIA.

Horrors! Did I hear you?—

Not married!

ALPHONSO.

No.

OLYMPIA.

Not married!

ALPHONSO.

No, OLYMPIA.

142 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

OLYMPIA.

Not married!—Oh such monstrous villainy!
I'm dizzy—hold me—ah!—

ALPHONSO.

What shall I do? Dear dear OLYMPIA!—ah me!
I fear she's dead. A sad and mortal paleness
O'er spreads her lovely face—These hands are cold
And damp as clay—She does not breathe—O God,
She's gone for ever—Dead, dead, dead, OLYMPIA!
O horrible hour!—I follow thee,—yes, thou
Shalt be my angel to conduct my flight
From this base world.—She stirs—the deadly hue
Shifts from her cheek—she breathes—she sighs—
OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

Where am I?—Ah—

ALPHONSO.

Lift these sweet eyes again.

OLYMPIA.

Alas, this is no dream! I am awake.
It is ALPHONSO!—will no shock destroy me?
Ah! when shall I be dead?

ALPHONSO.

Talk not of dying.—

OLYMPIA, when you do, this world to me
Becomes a waste: 'tis little better now.

OLYMPIA.

What blows of fate the wretched may survive!

A TRAGEDY.

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The worst I had to fear is come upon me;
And yet I live!—But—

ALPHONSO.

Something in that look
Made beauty dreadful.

OLYMPIA.

Oh, my fatal rashness!

Alas, ALPHONSO!—yet what could I do?
Provoked by false intelligence—how false
Is yet a mystery: STURIO, an honest man,
Your friend, produced it. Was there room to
doubt

Of his integrity? your well-known hand
Confirmed it.—God of Heaven! I must suppose
Your friend corrupted, and that letter forged.
What?—I tore it hastily; yet still
It was so perfectly your hand, O villainy!
Ingenious villainy! 'twould have amazed you.

ALPHONSO.

Alas! this mystery is soon unravelled.
Forgive th' intemperance of a frantic fit:
'Twas mine, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

This is stranger still.
Quite inconceivable!

ALPHONSO.

I'll tell you all:
And when I've done judge if I was to blame,

S 2

144 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

My father, as you know, when all his arts
And interest fail'd to mitigate the King,
Would needs himself accompany my exile.
So much he stomached the disgrace, he swore
The burning vault should swallow Naples ere
He touched its shore again. Besides, he felt
Too much his friend Lord STRENI's altering
mind.

He dwelt on that; it stung him keenly: me
It only mortified. He strove in vain
To rouse me to resentment. Inwardly
He burnt for some fair opportunity,
That I might be the first to cancel vows
Which STRENI seem'd not forward to confirm.
The opportunity he wish'd for came
As fate had winged it. For I had not long
Pin'd at Palermo, when a friendship grew
Between my father and the Count CASERTA;
Who from some discontent had long before
Retired from Naples thither, and still loved
By sympathy whoever hated Naples.
This noble Count, proud of his ancient blood,
Had two young daughters. The eldest JULIA,
Some time had lived confined for an attempt
To steal a marriage with a youth whose family,
Tho' not obscure, he thought no match for his,
Now grown impatient of his jealous cares,
It pleas'd him in my favour to let slip

Some distant hints, which with a ranc'rous joy
 My father snatched; he pressed me eagerly
 To seize th' occasion: as inflexibly
 I waved the unwelcome offer. Till at last
 There went a rumour made my blood run cold,
 That my false rival's suit was daily prospering.
 When I look back, 'twas his own crafty lie,
 For I can trace it to his emissaries;
 Tho', blinded then and giddy with despair
 And jealousy, too easily was I wrought on
 To give it credit. What confirmed it too
 Was that to all my frequent letters, one
 Reply had ne'er been made.

OLYMPIA.

Oh Heaven!—not one
 Of all those letters ever came to cheer
 My desolate mind. I guess'd the cause, it seems,
 Too truly.—But proceed.

ALPHONSO.

Long urg'd and teiz'd
 In vain, at last provok'd I made my suit;
 Which, from a coy reception, by degrees
 Was kindly entertained: but still it made
 A ling'ring progress, which I more rejoiced
 Than grieved at. For, tho' JULIA was compleat
 In all the engaging ways that could be wish'd
 In a companion; and, tho' scarce a beauty,
 Had personal charms sufficient to surprize

146 THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

A vacant breast; yet, ah OLYMPIA! mine
 Still with vain efforts struggled to shake off
 Its first lov'd conqueror's sway; and still I hoped:
 Till with such plausible consistent strokes
 Your marriage was reported, that self-flattery
 No longer could amuse me. By this our fathers,
 Tired with a dallied courtship, hurryingly
 Urged on the treaty, and the day was fix'd.
 'Twas now just not arrived, when late at night
 Your letter came. Never was mortal breast
 So tortured with conflicting powers; with joy,
 With anxious hopes and fluttering fears, shame,
 honour.

Not for all Sicily would I again
 Endure that restless night's perplexity,
 Tho' 'twas determined in my mind, howe'er
 The world might clamour, that all other interests,
 All other decencies and duties, should
 Yield to my engagement. The morning came
 On which I had to deal with difficulties
 That no address, without some miracle,
 Seemed equal to encounter. When, behold—
 JULIA was fled!—Good God! my lighten'd soul
 Grew mad with joy.—I took a hasty leave,
 And hied me hither.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! you came, ALPHONSO,

But just too late. But Heaven would have it
so.—

I'm doom'd to wretchedness!

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

Think on my misery!

OLYMPIA.

We both are ruined
By those who loved us, and have been too busy
To make us happy.

ALPHONSO.

Is there no resource?

No means to burst thro' all those rotten ties,
The work of treachery? Sure there are, OLYMPIA!
Heaven does not hear involuntary vows,
Vows cunningly surprized, or made in anger.
Shall the heart's vows, the ties of mutual love,
Old plighted faith, and sympathy of souls,
Yield to a mere cold formal obligation?
It must not be. I claim the elder right:
You were by all consents devoted mine,
Before this selfish insincere profane
Intruder ever saw you. Dear OLYMPIA,
Let us oppose fair arts to impious fraud.
I have the means at hand to snatch you from
This fatal place, to where the purest vows
May soon before the holy shrine dispel
The forcery of those sacrilegious rites;

148 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

And to its lawful owner render back
Th' inviolated prize.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas!

ALPHONSO, this is raving.

ALPHONSO.

Where's the difficulty?

The night comes on to favour this exploit.
Let us not curse our timid hearts hereafter
Because for fear of little squalls we lost
The tide of fortune.—Ah pity me, OLYMPIA!
To live without you is despair and frenzy.
I will not live upon such terms.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!

What you propose is neither fit nor practicable.
We needs must part—yes, we must part for ever.
Farewell, ALPHONSO?—Leave me to my fate;
No matter what it be. Farewell, farewell—
And when you think of me drop a sad tear,
And say there was a maid that lov'd me more
Than her own life. My kindest wishes still
Attend you with a warmth no time can cool;
And my last breath shall bless you. Again fare-
well.

ALPHONSO.

We must not part.

OLYMPIA.

We must, we must. Farewell.—
I heard a foot; it comes this way.—If e'er
You loved me, leave this place without delay.
Stay not a moment longer.—Ah ALPHONSO!—
Farewell for ever!

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA: stay!—
She's gone! O Heaven!

S C E N E III.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good God! it is ALPHONSO!—
This is astonishing! My dear dear friend,
This unexpected pleasure quite transports me.
Thrice welcome, dear ALPHONSO!

ALPHONSO.

Generous CLAUDIO,
I know it, and I thank your courtly words.
Would thoughts were visible, that it might appear
With what sincerity we love each other.
But compliments apart, pray are you not
Ashamed to see me?

130 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

CLAUDIO.

Why, ALPHONSO?

ALPHONSO.

Nay,

I know how nobly some despise all shame.
But are you not afraid to see the man
Who feels his wrongs, and will no longer bear
'em?

CLAUDIO.

I never was afraid to meet my foe,
Much less to see my friend. You have no cause
I'm sure, ALPHONSO, not to be my friend.
Were all the truth known it would soon appear
How from my heart I am, and still have been,
My generous brave ALPHONSO's. Hitherto
Indeed my friendly aims have still been cross'd;
And I have felt it more perhaps than you.
Tho' now those rubs to me seems rather fortunate:
For little steps, by which each ass can climb,
Are rather checks to merit, and disgrace
Generous ambition; which at one bold flight
Should seize a station worthy of itself.
And now the time draws near, when I shall prove
By deeds with what sincerity I still
Have lov'd ALPHONSO. Something that may suit
Aspiring worth I purpose to resign;
And but retain it till my interest has
Secured it yours. Nay were you not my friend,

Of all men living I should wish it yours :
Because I love my country as I ought,
And would be honoured in my successor.

ALPHONSO.

Fine words ! enough to make a gull of one
That did not know you. But they cost you no-
thing.—

You talk of friendship ! and to me, presumptuous !
You never was a friend, nor ever can be :
I know what spurious metal you are made of.
I come not here to dangle or amuse
The fool of hope with catching slippery promises.
I scorn the poultry sport.—Yet there's one favour,
The only one that I shall ever deign
To ask or to receive of you.

CLAUDIO.

What's that ?

ALPHONSO.

There is a fountain in the grove behind
The gardens, if you'll meet me there alone
Within this half hour, 'twill oblige me.

CLAUDIO.

Ha ! ha !

If one could guess why, this would seem a challenge.
You're pleasant, dear ALPHONSO. Ha ! ha ! ha !

ALPHONSO.

You will not laugh it off so.

T 2

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CLAUDIO.

If you're ferious,
 Why should I from the mere contagion of
 An angry look, or a few hasty words,
 Give up my calm mind to a giddy storm?
 Or be with impotent madness drawn into
 The eddy of my erring friend's conceits?
 If when my friend is drunk with causeless rage
 I lose my sober temper, I become
 The greater lunatic. Hear me, good ALPHONSO:
 I can and dare; but yet I should be sorry
 To use my sword without some solid cause.
 'T must be a solid cause indeed that spurs me
 To point it at the honest breast of one
 I've lov'd so truly. And, for all your anger,
 Believe me (for I know myself and you)
 Which of us ever falls, the other leads
 A life of horror and remorse no time
 Can ever cure. Then ere we fight at least
 Let us explain ourselves. 'Tis chiefly from
 Fantastic jealousies, childish fits of spleen,
 Mistakes on one side and false pride on th' other,
 That honest men e'er quarrel.—Pray, ALPHONSO,
 In what have I offended?

ALPHONSO.

Holy Heaven!

Who would not think this cheat a saint, an oracle?
 But there's no devil to a smooth-tongued villain,—

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n,—

In what have you offended?—Hark ye, tell me
Who was it that procured my banishment?
Who was it that embargoed sacred truth,
To give free traffic to pernicious lies?
And by the most perfidious arts contriv'd
To step between me and my dearest right?—
I see by your look you're innocent of the matter.
Deny it if you dare, I'll force the lie
Down that false throat.

CLAUDIO.

In one not given to wine;
Such frolics must proceed from want of sleep.
Calm these wild spirits with one night's repose,
And then I'll talk with you.

ALPHONSO.

Buffoon, no shuffling!
One of us two shall sleep his last to-night.—
You'll meet me presently.

CLAUDIO.

Excuse me now,
I'm otherways engaged.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

CLAUDIO.

Beware,
I must not hear this.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

154 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then—

ALPHONSO.

A stab!

Well aimed to miss. Now have at your false heart.

S C E N E IV.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO, STRENI,
and Servants.

STRENI.

What's this? what's this? Good Heaven!—beat down their swords.—

Hold, hold, I charge you.—Part them—Are you mad?—

Pray how began this fray? ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO, You're both my friends, and I am shocked to see Such hot-brained work between you. How began this?—

Go you and wait without—Pray who began this?—Come, CLAUDIO, tell me,—was it you?

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,

I ne'er began a quarrel.—Let me breathe first—And then I'll tell you.—

ALPHONSO.

Nay, 'twas I; I own it.—
Who else had reason to complain? 'Twas I,
Provoked by monstrous injuries, who gave
Opprobrious truths a vent. But 'twas not I,
Who like a cut-throat, an insidious coward,
Aimed at my unguarded enemy's heart. I'm sorry
It should have happened here. I did not mean
To scare the peace of this respected house
With angry deeds.

STRENI.

Young blood is hot, ALPHONSO.
When I was young like you my sword would ach
At every flight offence: where none was meant
I've been too madly brave. But when the fit
Was fairly fought out, it never failed to end
In warmest friendship. Trust me we have wept
With generous passion, at the sudden change
From bloody strife to cordial amity.
There is no joy to that which noble foes
At reconciliation feel. Come, come, your hands;
Yours CLAUDIO, yours ALPHONSO. Come, em-
brace:
Be friends for ever.

CLAUDIO.

I have ever been,
And still shall be ALPHONSO'S.

156 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

ALPHONSO.

As sincerely
Shall I be CLAUDIO's.—But you'll meet me?

CLAUDIO.

Yes.

ALPHONSO.

Directly.

CLAUDIO.

Doubt not.

ALPHONSO.

Till then—farewell.—Good night.
My Lord, I must away. If you have ought
To do at Naples, I'm your post; for there
I must be ere I sleep.

STRENI.

Good night, ALPHONSO.
I'm sorry for this haste: next time we meet
I hope to taste your company at more leisure.

S C E N E V.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

STRENI.

How does my Count? You are not hurt I hope?

CLAUDIO.

Not hurt, my Lord, but truly much amazed.
I did not dream to meet ALPHONSO here;
Still less that we should quarrel.

STRENI.

'Tis no wonder.

CLAUDIO.

Not, that he should, before his wedding day
Could well be over, traverse land and sea
In search of quarrels?

STRENI.

There's your mistake, my friend.—
That marriage came to nothing.

CLAUDIO.

Is it possible?

STRENI.

'Tis true.

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then no wonder he should seek
To pierce my heart thro'. But how could this
happen?

STRENI.

I've learnt it but just now. 'Tis so. Within
I'll tell you how.

S C E N E VI.

CLAUDIO, *an Officer.*

OFFICER.

My Lord, my Lord, Lord CLAUDIO!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! who is this?—my watchful friend? what news?

There's horror in thy look.

OFFICER.

Fly, fly, my Lord.

This instant fly. They'll presently be here.
Your life is fold. Fly, fly.

CLAUDIO.

My life?

OFFICER.

Your kinsman

Has bought his own with yours.

CLAUDIO.

I thank him. Come,
Thy hand, I owe thee much; and if I live
Thou'rt made for ever.

A TRAGEDY.

159

OFFICER.

Ah! my good Lord. But fly.
Lose not a moment. Could I but contrive
To misdirect their search.—I'll try.

CLAUDIO.

Farewell.

Success attend you,

SCENE VII.

CLAUDIO.

What a fool was I
Not to have laid this prating knave asleep,
This tell-tale coward, when I safely might?
But that's too late.—What's next?—I'll meet my
foe.—

This challenge happens well. For if he drops,
I fly for that; no other crime supposed
To startle me. 'Tis something, plausibly
To shun the fire-edge of a nation's vengeance.
And to gain time gives art and fortune room
To work such happy wonders, that despair
Should never seize the wise.—But should I fall
By this impetuous boy.—Yet better so
Than give the curious mob a holiday
To see my head jump off.—But then he comes

U 2

160 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

A conqueror to possess my bridal bed;
And meet with mutual ardour virgin charms
That fruitlessly were mine.—That's worse than
death!

It must not be. Against a deadly foe
All arts are justified.—Thou dy'st, ALPHONSO.
Prepare to meet a sterner bride. I come:
Please Heaven thou shalt not triumph in my doom.

ACT V. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

STRENI.

'Tis but a qualm, a fit o' th' spleen, that's all.
'Twill soon blow over.

VICTORIA.

Consider it not so slightly,
My Lord: she's dreadfully ill; so much unhinged
The down that hardly lights might turn the scale
And sink her past recovery.—O 'twas frightful
To see her agonies!

STRENI.

How was she taken?

A TRAGEDY.

161

VICTORIA.

With a countenance so changed I hardly knew her,
Sobbing and trembling, shockingly pale as from
A mortal wound, she burst into the room
And flounced upon the floor. I flew to raise her;
Let me lie still and die, she said: half raised
Flat on her face she rush'd again, and lay
Like one abandoned to despair. Astonish'd
What this should mean, I learnt at last a tale
Enough to make her mad indeed.—You know it.

STRENI.

It happened ill; 'twas pity. But what next?

VICTORIA.

After the sad recital, long she sat
Pensive, and lost in thought: one might as well
Have talk'd to a statue; at last she started up
And walk'd about and muttered frantically.
Music, her favourite study and delight,
I hoped might calm her; but no sooner rushed
The harmony on her ears than down she sunk
Upon a couch, and wept immoderately.
I thought my heart would have broke.—

STRENI.

My poor OLYMPIA!

VICTORIA.

I sent to stop the music. After a pause
Of silent grief, a fit of laughing seized her,

162 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

So violent, so unnatural as it seemed,
'Twas perfectly shocking. It left her quite ex-
hausted ;
And now she sleeps.

STRENI.

She has had such fits before.
This kind repose will cure her. Poor OLYMPIA
Has ever been too sensible to grief,
To joy, to all impressions; the misfortune
Of delicate spirits, which shake at every gust
That blows or hot or cold. Do, my VICTORIA,
Go keep all quiet, and when she wakes send
hither.
She'll soon be well.

VICTORIA.

Would I were sure of that !

STRENI.

O never doubt it.—Who's there?—How I'm
beset
With teizing cares and fretful circumstances !

SCENE II.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

No news yet of the Count? not one returned yet
Of those that went to search?

SERVANT.

Not one, my Lord.

STRENI.

You sent them different ways?

SERVANT.

My Lord, I did.

STRENI.

I doubt some misadventure. Go, LORENZO,
Speed me the news whate'er they be, and rid me
Of this suspense.

S C E N E III.

STRENI.

There's mischief in the wind.

He flit abruptly from me, after some
Ambiguous words, which then I did not mark.
They've surely met. That reconciliation was
A sham to blind me. I remember now
At shaking hands they whisper'd something.—
Death!

I might have guess'd it. But who could have
dreamt

He would have been so mad? What, in the name
Of all that's blundering, could provoke a man
Of courage so well proved, at such a time
To meet a foe whose challenge at any time
He might more to his dignity refuse?
Curse on his ill-tim'd valour!—I hope he's kill'd.
By heaven I care not! Such romantic fools
Should have no friends, and when they fall de-
serve

No pity.—Gods! will none come breathless in
To tell me he lies cold?—Here comes the tale.
Out with it—speak—the worst at once.

S C E N E IV.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,
The gates are all beset with armed men.

STRENI.

Confusion! What is this? What armed men?
Is this young russian mad? From its firm base
He heaves this marble-pillar'd castle first,
And mounts it on the wind—He force these gates!
Were he an earthquake shot from hell he should
not.—

What armed men?

SERVANT.

The servants of the state.

STRENI.

O God! God! God!

SERVANT.

Their leading officer,
My Lord, desires an audience.

STRENI.

Send him hither.

S C E N E V.

STRENI.

O monstrous! monstrous! O amazing villain!
I'm stupified to death. The world might rush
And I not feel it now.

S C E N E VI.

STRENI, OFFICERS.

OFFICER.

My Lord, I come
On an unpleasing duty, to demand
On the state's part, one whom may justice find
Without a flaw, a guest of this fair roof—
Count CLAUDIO.

STRENI.

Sir, he was here, but is gone;
And may all plagues go with him. Sir, he's va-
nished.
He disappeared, as fiends do, suddenly.
By this he shakes all hell with laughing at
Our fruitless search.

A TRAGEDY.

167

OFFICER.

My Lord, you cannot mean
To hide him from the state. Th' attempt were
vain,
Might turn suspicion into certainty.
Where'er he be, if I may judge, my Lord,
'Twere wise he should surrender.

STRENI.

Sir, this house [*Rings.*]
Is open to you; find him if you can.
These walls shall screen no traitor. If he's here
I'm much deceived.

OFFICER.

I doubt not, good my Lord,
Your well known honour. But the state's com-
mand
Must punctually be followed; and I hope
My Lord will pardon to our present office
What rigid form exacts.

STRENI.

You're welcome, Sir.
Who's there?—LORENZO, shew these Gentlemen
That if there lurks a traitor here, this house
Is sick till it disgorge him.

OFFICER.

After what
You have declared, my Lord, our search becomes

168 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

A fruitless office, a mere ceremony;
Which you'll excuse.

STRENI.

O Sir, most heartily.

S C E N E VII.

STRENI.

O this infernal traitor! what could move him
T' abuse me thus!—He thought perhaps to screen
His frauds by my alliance. Subtle fool,
This unaccomplish'd treaty binds us not.
Or if it did; were he my daughter's husband,
And she a mother by him, he should find me
No patron of his crimes. Ah poor OLYMPIA!
How I have plagued myself and tortured thee,
To match thee thus unworthily!—Death and hell!
What madness, what curs'd dæmon, prompted me
T' anticipate the day? Had I not been
Bereft of judgment and all patience this
Disgrace could ne'er have touched us.—O fool!
O shame!

To be this felon's tool! Yet who could dream
He should be such a villain? How unshaken,
He stood what conscious innocence might shrink
at!

But callous villainy feels no shame——

SCENE VIII.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,

I bring disastrous news.

STRENI.

Let those who ne'er
Have felt misfortune start when sorrow's named.
For me I grow so hardened to all shocks
I might defy the fates. Then tell thy tale,
Were it as mortal as the cannon's mouth
Discharge it on mine ear.

SERVANT.

My Lord,——ALPHONSO

Is kill'd.

STRENI.

Unfortunate youth!

SERVANT.

The Count is fled,
With fifty horsemen at his heels.

STRENI.

I grieve
For poor ALPHONSO.—Where found you him?

170 THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

SERVANT.

In the Grove.

Shot thro' the breast; just dropt; his hand clinch'd
His half-drawn sword. [on

STRENI.

O murderous villain!—Go,
Compose the body privately; and let
No whisper of this sad event steal out
T' alarm too tender ears.—

S C E N E IX.

STRENI.

Ah poor OLYMPIA!
How shall thy tottering senses bear this shock?
Had I not fatally interposed thou might'st
Have been the happiest—

S C E N E X.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

O my Lord! my Lord!—

STRENI.

What now, VICTORIA?

A TRAGEDY.

171

VICTORIA.

POOR OLYMPIA!—

STRENI.

What!

VICTORIA.

O mad! mad! mad! The poor dear creature's
mad!

STRENI.

Just heaven forbid!

VICTORIA.

Alas! it is too sure.—

Just now from a most unquiet sleep, that seem'd
Nature conflicting with despair, she started;
Cried murder! murder! help! ALPHONSO's mur-
der'd!

Then with such wildness in her looks and action,
Such frantic vehemence of terror, grief,
And pity, she address'd th' invisible air;
It chill'd us all with horror.—You'd have thought
ALPHONSO had been kill'd indeed, and that
His ghost stood there.

STRENI.

Amazement!

VICTORIA.

By and by

She flew to the window; whence her delicate
frame

172 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Is with convulsive violence so possess'd,
'Twas all that three of us could do to hinder
A fatal leap.

STRENI.

Heaven guard my child! [Going.]

OLYMPIA, *behind the Scenes.*

Away!

Away! I say.—

STRENI.

Hush!

OLYMPIA.

Hold me not, good fiends!

In God's name vanish! Fly, fly, fly!

WOMAN.

Dear Madam!—

S C E N E XI.

STRENI, VICTORIA, OLYMPIA,
Women.

OLYMPIA.

Dear me no dear! I'll not be dear'd. Avaunt,
Ye wheedling witches! I know who taught you
that.

Off, I conjure you—Go——Hah! what are these!

STRENI.

How does my dearest child!

OLYMPIA.

This looks so like

My father, and speaks so like him!

STRENI.

I am, I am.

Dost thou not know me?

OLYMPIA.

Are you not a ghost then?

Mere visible nothing, as ineffential

As the vain rainbow? With reverence let me
touch

Your hand. I shall know by that.—O 'tis, 'tis,

My real father, let me kiss for ever ['tis

This sacred hand. I'll never part with it more.—

But why d'ye look so sad? There's something
troubles you.

STRENI.

Alas, my child!—

OLYMPIA.

O do not weep; that's dreadful.

My heart is ready to break to see you thus:

And yet I cannot weep. Oh! Oh!—Come, this

Let us go home.

[way,

STRENI.

Thou'rt there already.

274 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

OLYMPIA.

O fye

That you should talk so!—D'ye see these creatures?

STRENI.

Yes,

Your faithful servants.

OLYMPIA.

Witches! witches! witches!

The mermaids of the burning sea! Heaven snatch
us

From these enchanted walls!—Th' arch conjurer
Will soon be here, and then all's lost.—

STRENI.

Who's that?

OLYMPIA.

His name is—I forgot it, but you may guess.—
Do not be angry. My head's confused a little:
But I hope I said no harm. I named nobody:
Yet I'm afraid you're angry.—O blast me not
With heavy curses!

STRENI.

Heaven for ever bless

My dearest child!

OLYMPIA.

Indeed you are too kind.

To your poor unduteous daughter. Heaven and
you

Forgive my crimes! that I may die when I
please.—

O curse on all mistakes!

STRENI.

What dost thou mean?

OLYMPIA.

I'll tell you when the mists are gone.—I have it.
I chid ALPHONSO cruelly—Heaven forgive me!
Indeed he was not such a fickle coxcomb
As some suppose.—They told me he was married;
But I know other matters. Oh! oh! oh!—

STRENI.

Kind Heaven restore her precious wits again,
And punish me with any other plague
But this!—

OLYMPIA.

D'ye know what I dreamt last night?—Oh 'twas
A hideous fancy!—

STRENI.

Never mind dreams, my child.

OLYMPIA.

The Moon spoke to me! 'Twas horrible. Yet that
Was a trifle to what happened afterwards.—
O this head! this head!—
I cannot put it into words; but while
Such dreams are going who would dare to
sleep?—

I have not slept this month.

176 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

Come, dear OLYMPIA,
'Tis late, come go to bed. I'll watch by your
side,
While sweet repose dissolves these idle fears.
Let us to bed.

OLYMPIA.

Away!—Are you a witch too!
You league against me too?—Cousin of vengeance,
Hark you, I'll never go to bed; I'll die first.—
O fye, fye, fye! to what would you betray me!
Go, go, vile shocking creature!—

STRENI.

This to VICTORIA,
Your dearest friend, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

Yes, my friend!
Such friends as Heaven defend me from!—My
friend,
To snatch the antidote of all forcery from me?
The balm that heals all wounds.—Ah you're a
trusty one;
Would I had known you sooner!

STRENI.

What means this?

VICTORIA.

Mere jealous fancies, sick imaginations,
Like all the rest.

OLYMPIA.

Hark ye:—Nay if you weep
I've done. I'm such a tender-hearted fool.—
Ah VICTORIA, VICTORIA!—

VICTORIA.

Dear dear OLYMPIA!—

OLYMPIA.

Hush! What's that? Let me go.
He's coming.

VICTORIA.

Who, my dear!

OLYMPIA.

'Tis CLAUDIO.—Hide me!—

STRENI.

He'll trouble thee no more.—He's gone.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! would

I had never seen him! that's my prayer, and if
There's any harm in it—O Heaven!—See there!

STRENI.

Bless thee! What's there?

OLYMPIA.

See! See!

STRENI.

See what, my child?

OLYMPIA.

D'ye ask?

178 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

What should I see?

OLYMPIA.

A fight to break
A heart of rock, and make the lion whine
Like a whipt spaniel.—ALPHONSO pale and bloody!
O misery, misery! O most lamented youth!
Who did this cruel stern remorseless deed
No miracle can undo!--Dead, murder'd, butcher'd!
Speak, I conjure you. Dear dreadful vision, say
What ruffian shall be torn on the wheel for this?
Oh! 'tis not to be born to see you look so.—
Speak if thou canst—He's gone!

STRENI.

Alas! my child,
Thou speak'st to the winds.

OLYMPIA.

Good God! VICTORIA!

VICTORIA.

'Twas a mere fancy, for ALPHONSO lives;
And lives, I hope, for many happy days
With his OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Insupportable!
Must I be juggled out of my senses thus?
It seems I am a child, a fool. Wife cousin,
Pray do not laugh at me: do not, I say.

And yet it may be wit perhaps to jest
With torture and despair.

VICTORIA.

Can you suspect me
For such a monster?

OLYMPIA.

Did you not see him plainly?

VICTORIA.

Believe me, no.

OLYMPIA.

That's strange! that's strange, indeed!

STRENI.

How deadly pale,
She's grown!—Thou'rt sick, my child.

OLYMPIA.

Too well, too well!
Only a little chillness wanders o'er me.—
Hark how my ears ring! Lend me your hand,

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Alas! thou shudder'st so thou canst not stand.
Cold sweats bedew thee; thou'rt ready to faint,
dear girl.

Come, lean upon this couch. So.—

OLYMPIA.

As you will.
Do with me what you please.—Ha! there again!

186 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Now if you do not see him you're blind.—Dear
father

Behold! see there!—I come, I come, ALPHONSO!
Receive me, Heaven—and you—

STRENI.

Ah! hold her up!

She falls like one shot thro' the brain.

VICTORIA.

Alas!

She's dead! dead! dead!

STRENI.

'Tis but a fit I hope.—

Hold up her head.—Help, help! Oh all the world
To hear her speak again!—Ah me! that face
Is fix'd in death. She's cold, cold—poor OLYM-
PIA!

I've liv'd too long. She's gone, my faultless child
For ever gone—and I her murderer—Oh!

T A S T E:
AN
E P I S T L E
TO A
Y O U N G C R I T I C.

First Printed in the Year MDCCLIII.

*Proferre qua sentiat cur quisquam liber dubitet?—Malim, me-
hercule, solus insanire, quam sobrius aut plebis aut potrum de-
lirationibus ignaviter assentari—*Autor anonym. *Fragm.*

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T A S T E:
AN
E P I S T L E
TO A
Y O U N G C R I T I C.

RANGE from Tower-hill all London to the Fleet,

Thence round the Temple, t'utmost Grosvenor-street:

Take in your route both Gray's and Lincoln's Inn;

Miss not, be sure, my Lords and Gentlemen;

You'll hardly raise, as I with * *Petty* guess, }
Above twelve thousand men of taste; unless }
In desperate times a *Connoisseur* may pass.

* Sir William Petty, author of the *Political Arithmetic*,

“ A Connoisseur ! What’s that ? ” ’Tis hard to say :

But you must oft amidst the fair and gay
Have seen a wou’d-be rake, a fluttering fool, 10
Who swears he loves the sex with all his soul.
Alas, vain youth ! dost thou admire sweet Jones ?
Thou be gallant without or blood or bones !
You’d split to hear th’ insipid coxcomb cry
Ah charming Nanny ! ’tis too much ! I die ! — 15
Die and be d—n’d, says one ; but let me tell ye
I’ll pay the loss if ever rapture kill ye.

’Tis easy learnt the art to talk by rote :
At Nando’s ’twill but cost you half a groat ;
The Bedford school at three-pence is not dear, Sir ;
At White’s—*the stars instruct you* for a tester. 21
But he, whom nature never meant to share
One spark of taste, will never catch it there :—
Nor no where else ; howe’er the booby beau
Grows great with Pope, and Horace, and Boileau.

Good native Taste, tho’ rude, is seldom wrong,
Be it in music, painting, or in song.
But this, as well as other faculties,
Improves with age and ripens by degrees.
I know, my dear ; ’tis needless to deny ’t, 30
You like Voiture, you think him wondrous bright :
But seven years hence, your relish more matur’d,

What now delights will hardly be endur'd.
 The boy may live to taste Racine's fine charms,
 Whom Lee's bald orb or Rowe's dry rapture
 warms :

But he, enfranchis'd from his tutor's care, 36
 Who places Butler near Cervantes' chair ;
 Or with Erasmus can admit to vie
 Brown of Squab-hall *of merry memory* ;
 Will die a Goth : and nod at * Woden's feast, 40
 Th' eternal winter long, on † Gregory's breast.

Long may he swill, this patriarch of the dull,
 The drowsy Mum—But touch not Maro's skull !
 His holy barbarous dotage fought to doom,
 Good heaven ! th' immortal classics to the tomb!—
 Those sacred lights shall bid new genius rise 45
 When all Rome's saints have rotted from the skies.
 Be these your guides, if at the ivy crown
 You aim ; each country's classic's, and your own.
 But chiefly with the ancients pass your prime, 50
 And drink Castalia at the fountain's brim.

* Alluding to the Gothic heaven, Woden's hall; where the happy are for ever employed in drinking beer, mum, and other comfortable liquours out of the skulls of those whom they had slain in battle.

† Pope Gregory the VIth, distinguished by the name of St. Gregory ; whose pious zeal, in the cause of barbarous ignorance and priestly tyranny, exerted itself in demolishing, to the utmost of his power, all the remains of heathen genius.

The man to genuine Burgundy bred up,
Soon starts the dash of Methuen in his cup.

Those sovereign masters of the Muses skill
Are the true patterns of good writing still. 55
Their ore was rich and seven times purg'd of lead;
Their art seem'd nature, 'twas so finely hid.
Tho' born with all the powers of writing well,
What pains it cost they did not blush to tell.
Their ease (my Lords!) ne'er lowng'd for want of
fire,

Nor did their rage thro' affectation tire. 61
Free from all tawdry and imposing glare
They trusted to their native grace of air.
Rapt'rous and wild the trembling soul they
Or sly coy beauties steal it by degrees; [seize, } 65
The more you view them still the more they }
please.

Yet there are thousands of scholastic merit
Who worm their sense out but ne'er taste their
spirit.

Witness each pedant under Bentley bred;
Each commentator that e'er commented. 70
(You scarce can seize a spot of classic ground,
With leagues of Dutch morals so floated round.)
Witness—but, Sir, I hold a cautious pen,
Lest I should *wrong* some *honourable men*.

They grow enthusiasts too—'Tis true! 'tis pity!
 But 'tis not every lunatic that's witty. 71
 Some have run Maro—and some Milton—mad,
 Ashley once turn'd a solid barber's head:
 Hear all that's said or printed if you can,
 Ashley has turn'd more solid heads than one. 8a

Let such admire each great or specious name;
 For right or wrong the joy to them's the same.
 "Right!" Yes a thousand times.—Each fool has
 heard

That Homer was a wonder of a bard.
 Despise them civilly with all my heart— 85
 But to convince them is a desperate part.
 Why should you teize one for what secret cause
 One doats on Horace, or on Hudibras?
 'Tis cruel, Sir, 'tis needless, to endeavour
 To teach a sot of Taste he knows no flavour. 90
 To disunite I neither wish nor hope
 A stubborn blockhead from his fav'rite fop.
 Yes—fop I say, were Maro's self before 'em:
 For Maro's self grows dull as they pore o'er him.

But hear their raptures o'er some specious rhyme
 Dub'd by the musk'd and greasy mob sublime. 96
 For spleen's dear sake hear how a coxcomb prates
 As clam'rous o'er his joys as fifty cats;
 "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast,

"*To soften rocks, and oaks,*"—and all the rest: 100

"*I've heard*"—Bless these long ears!—"Heav'n's
what a strain!

"Good God! What thunders burst in this *Campaign*!

"Hark Waller warbles! Ah! how sweetly killing!

"Then that inimitable Splendid Shilling!

"Rowe breathes all Shakespear here!—That ode
of Prior 105

"Is Spencer quite! egad his very fire!—

"As like"—Yes faith! as gum-flowers to the rose,
Or as to Claret flat Minorca's dose;

As like as (if I am not grossly wrong)

Erle Robert's Mice to aught e'er Chaucer sung.

Read boldly, and unprejudic'd peruse 111

Each fav'rite modern, ev'n each ancient muse.

With all the comic salt and tragic rage

The great stupendous genius of our stage,

Boast of our island, pride of human-kind, 111

Had faults to which the boxes are not blind.

His frailties are to every gossip known:

Yet Milton's pedantries not shock the town.

Ne'er be the dupe of Names, however high;

For some out-live good parts, some misapply. 120

Each elegant Spectator you admire;

But must you therefore swear by Cato's fire?

Masques for the court, and oft a clumsy jest,

Disgrac'd the muse that wrought the Alchemist.

" But to the ancients."—Faith ! I am not clear,
 For all the smooth round type of Elzevir, 126
 That every work which lasts in prose or song,
 Two thousand years, deserves to last so long.
 For not to mention some eternal blades
 Known only now in th' academic shades, 130
 (Those sacred groves where raptur'd spirits stray,
 And in word-hunting waste the live-long day)
 Ancients whom none but curious critics scan,
 Do, read * Messala's praises if you can.
 Ah ! who but feels the sweet contagious smart 135
 While soft Tibullus pours his tender heart ?
 With him the Loves and Muses melt in tears ;
 But not a word of some hexameters.
 " You grow so squeamish and so dev'lish dry,
 " You'll call Lucretius vapid next." Not I. 140
 Some find him tedious, others think him lame :
 But if he lags, his subject is to blame.
 Rough weary roads thro' barren wilds he tried,
 Yet still he marches with true Roman pride :
 Sometimes a meteor, gorgeous, rapid, bright, 145
 He streams athwart the philosophic night.
 Find you in Horace no insipid Odes ?—
 He dar'd to tell us Homer sometimes nods ;
 And but for such a critic's hardy skill
 Homer might slumber unsuspected still. 150

* A poem of Tibullus's in hexameter verse ; as yawning and insipid as his elegies are tender and natural.

'Tasteless, implicit, indolent and tame,
 At second-hand we chiefly praise or blame.
 Hence 'tis, for else one knows not why nor how,
 Some authors flourish for a year or two :
 For many some, more wond'rous still to tell; 155
 Farquhar yet lingers on the brink of hell.
 Of solid merit others pine unknown;
 At first, tho' * Carlos swimmingly went down, }
 Poor Belvidera fail'd to melt the town. }
 Sunk in dead night the giant Milton lay 160
 'Till Sommer's hand produc'd him to the day.
 But, thanks to heav'n and Addison's good grace
 Now ev'ry fop is charm'd with Chevy Chase.

Specious and sage, the sovereign of the flock
 Led to the downs, or from the wave-worn rock 165
 Reluctant hurl'd, the tame implicit train
 Or crop the downs, or headlong seek the main.
 As blindly we our solemn leaders follow,
 And good, and bad, and execrable swallow.

Pray, on the first throng'd evening of a play 170
 That wears the * *facies hippocratica*,

* Don Carlos, a tragedy of Otway's, now long and
 justly forgotten, went off with great applause; while his
 Orphan, a somewhat better performance, and what is yet
 more strange, his Venice Preserved, according to the theatri-
 cal anecdotes of those times, met with a very cold reception.

† The appearance of the face in the last stage of a con-
 sumption, as it is described by Hippocrates.

Strong lines of death, signs dire of reprobation;
 Have you not seen the angel of salvation
 Appear sublime; with wise and solemn rap
 To teach the doubtful rabble where to clap?— 175
 The rabble knows not where our dramas shine;
 But where the cane goes pat—*by G— that's fine!*

Judge for yourself; nor wait with timid phlegm
 'Till some illustrious pedant hum or hem. 179
 The lords who starv'd old Ben were learn'dly fond
 Of Chaucer, whom with bungling toil they conn'd.
 Their sons, whose ears bold Milton could not
 seize,
 Would laugh o'er Ben like mad, and snuff and
 sneeze,
 And swear, and seem as tickled as you please.
 Their spawn, the pride of this sublimer age, 185
 Feel to the toes and horns grave Milton's rage.
 Tho' liv'd he now he might appeal with scorn
 To Lords, Knights, 'Squires and Doctors, yet
 unborn;
 Or justly mad to Moloch's burning fane
 Devote the choicest children of his brain. 190
 Judge for yourself; and as you find report
 Of wit as freely as of beef or port.
 Zounds! shall a pert or bluff important wight,
 Whose brain is fanciless, whose blood is white;

A mumbling ape of taste; prescribe us laws 194
 To try the poets, for no better cause
 Than that he boasts *per ann.* ten thousand clear,
 Yelps in the House, or barely fits a Peer?
 For shame! for shame! the liberal British soul
 To stoop to any stale dictator's rule! 200

I may be wrong, and often am no doubt,
 But right or wrong with friends with foes 'twill
 out.
 Thus 'tis perhaps my fault if I complain
 Of trite invention and a flimsy vein,
 Tame characters, uninteresting, jejune, 205
 And passions drily copied from * Le Brun.
 For I would rather never judge than wrong
 That friend of all men, generous Fenelon.

* First painter to Lewis XIV. who, to speak in fashionable French English, called himself LEWIS THE GREAT. Our sovereign lords the passions, Love, Rage, Despair, etc. were graciously pleased to sit to him in their turns for their portraits: which he was generous enough to communicate to the public; to the great improvement, no doubt, of history-painting. It was he who they say poison'd Le Sueur; who, without half his advantages in many other respects, was so unreasonable and provoking as to display a genius with which his own could stand no comparison. It was he and his Gothic disciples, who, with sly scratches, defaced the most masterly of this Le Sueur's performances, as often as their barbarous envy could snugly reach them. Yet after all these achievements he died in his bed! A catastrophe which could not have happened to him in a coun-

But in the name of goodness, must I be 210
 The dupe of charms I never yet could see?
 And then to flatter where there's no reward—
 Better be any patron-hunting bard,
 Who half our Lords with filthy praise besmears,
 And sing an Anthem to ALL MINISTERS:
 Taste th' Attic salt in ev'ry Peer's poor rebus, 215
 And crown each Gothic idol for a Phœbus.

Alas! so far from free, so far from brave,
 We dare not shew the little Taste we have.
 With us you'll see ev'n vanity controul
 The most refin'd sensations of the soul. 220
 Sad Otway's scenes, great Shakespear's we defy:
 "Lard, Madam! 'tis so unpolite to cry!—
 "For shame, my dear! d'ye credit all this stuff?—
 "I vow—well, this is innocent enough!"
 At Athens long ago, the Ladies—(married) 225
 Dreamt not they misbehav'd tho' they miscarried,
 When a wild poet with licentious rage
 Turn'd fifty furies loose upon the stage.

They were so tender and so easy mov'd,
 Heav'ns! how the Grecian ladies must have lov'd!
 For all the fine sensations still have dwelt, 231
 Perhaps, where one was exquisitely felt.

try like this, where the *fine arts* are as zealously and judiciously patronized as they are well understood.

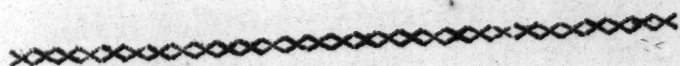
Thus he who heavenly Maro truly feels
 Stands fix'd on Raphael, and at Handel thrills.
 The grosser senses too, the taste, the smell,
 Are likely truest where the fine prevail : } ²³⁵
 Who doubts that Horace must have cater'd
 well?

Friend, I'm a shrewd observer, and will guess
 What books you doat on from your fav'rite mess.
 Brown and L'Estrange will surely charm whom-
 e'er

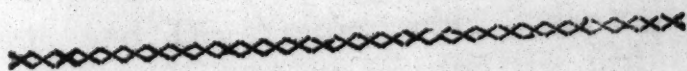
The frothy pertness strikes of weak small-beer.
 Who steeps the calf's fat join in greasy sauce
 Will hardly loathe the praise that bastes an ass.
 Who riots on Scotcht Collops scorns not any
 Insipid, fulsome, trashy miscellany ; } ²⁴⁵
 And who devours whate'er the cook can dish up,
 Will for a classic consecrate each * bishop.

But I am sick of pen and ink ; and you
 Will find this letter long enough. Adieu !

* See Felton's Classics.



IMITATIONS
OF
SHAKESPEARE AND SPENCER.



IMITATION

Advertisement from the Publisher.

THE following Imitation of Shakspeare was one of our Author's first attempts in poetry, made when he was very young. It help'd to amuse the solitude of a winter past in a wild romantic country; and, what is rather particular, was just finished when Mr. Thomson's celebrated poem upon the same subject appeared. Mr. Thomson, soon hearing of it, had the curiosity to procure a copy by the means of a common acquaintance. He shewed it to his poetical friends, Mr. Mallet, Mr. Aaron Hill, and Dr. Young, who, it seems, did great honour to it; and the first-mentioned Gentleman wrote to one of his friends at Edinburgh, desiring the author's leave to publish it; a request too flattering to youthful vanity to be resisted. But Mr. Mallet altered his

mind; and this little piece has hitherto remained unpublished.

The other Imitations of Shakespeare happen to have been saved out of the ruins of an unfinish'd tragedy on the story of *Tereus* and *Philomela*; attempted upon an irregular and extravagant plan, at an age much too early for such achievements. However, they are here exhibited for the sake of such guests as may like a little repast of scraps.

199
I M I T A T I O N S

O F

S H A K E S P E A R E.

NOW Summer with her wanton court is gone
To revel on the south side of the world,
And flaunt and frolic out the live-long day.
While Winter rising pale from northern seas
Shakes from his hoary locks the drizzling rheum. 5
A blast so shrewd makes the tall-bodied pines
Unfinew'd bend, and heavy-paced bears
Sends growling to their savage tenements.

Now blows the furly north, and chills through-
out
The stiffening regions; while, by stronger charms,
Than Circe e'er or fell Medea brew'd, 11
Each brook that wont to prattle to its banks
Lies all bestill'd and wedg'd betwixt its banks,

Nor moves the wither'd reeds: and the rash flood
That from the mountains held its headstrong
course, 15

Buried in livid sheets of vaulting ice,
Seen thro' the shameful breaches, idly creeps
To pay a scanty tribute to the ocean.

What wonder? when the floating wilderness
That scorns our miles, and calls Geography 20
A shallow pryer; from whose unsteady mirrour
The high hung pole surveys his dancing locks;
When this still-raving deep lies mute and dead,
Nor heaves its swelling bosom to the winds.

The surges, baited by the fierce north-east 25
Tossing with fretful spleen their angry heads
To roar and rush together,

Even in the foam of all their madness struck
To monumental ice, stand all astride
The rocks they washed so late. Such execution,
So stern, so sudden, wrought the grisly aspect 31
Of terrible Medusa, ere young Perseus

With his keen sabre cropt her horrid head,
And laid her serpents rowling on the dust;
When wandering thro' the woods she frown'd to
stone 35

Their savage tenants: just as the foaming lion
Sprung furious on his prey, her speedier power
Outrun his haste; no time to languish in,
But fix'd in that fierce attitude he stands

Like rage in marble.—Now portly Argosies 40
Lie wedg'd 'twixt Neptune's ribs. The bridg'd
abyss

Has chang'd our ships to horses; the swift bark
Yield to the heavy waggon and the cart,
That now from isle to isle maintain the trade;
And where the surface-haunting Dolphin led 45
Her sportive young, is now an area fit
For the wild school-boy's pastime.

Meantime the evening skies, crufted with ice,
Shifting from red to black their weighty skirts,
Hang mournful o'er the hills; and stealing night
Rides the bleak puffing winds, that seem to spit
Their foam sparfe thro' the welkin, which is no-
thing 52

If not beheld. Anon the burden'd heaven
Shakes from its ample sieve the boulded snow;
That fluttering down besprinkles the sad trees
In mockery of leaves; piles up the hills 56
To monstrous altitude, and choaks to the lips
The deep impervious vales that yawn as low
As to the centre, Nature's vasty-breaches.
While all the pride of men and mortal things 60
Lies whelm'd in heaven's white ruins.—

The shivering clown digs his obstructed way
Thro' the snow-barricadoed cottage door;

And muffled in his home-spun plaid encounters
With livid cheeks and rheum-distilling nose 65
The morning's sharp and scourging breath; to
count

His starving flock whose number's all too short
To make the goodly sum of yester-night:
Part deep ingurgitated, part yet struggling
With their last pantings melt themselves a grave
In Winter's bosom; which yields not to the touch
Of the pale languid crescent of this world, 71
That now with lean and churlish husbandry
Yields heartlessly the remnants of his prime;
And like those spendthrifts starves his latter days
For former rankness. He with bleary eye 75
Blazons his own disgrace; the harness'd waste
Rebellious to his blunt defeated shafts;
And idly strikes the chalky mountains tops
That rise to kiss the Welkin's ruddy lips;
Where all the rash young bullies of the air 80
Mount their quick slender penetrating wings,
Whipping the frost-burnt villagers to the bones;
And growing with their motion mad and furious,
'Till swoln to tempests they out-rage the thunder;
Winnow the chaffy snow, and mock the skies 85
Even with their own artillery retorted;
Tear up and throw th' accumulated hills
Into the vallies. And as rude hurricanes,
Discharged from the wind-swoln cheeks of heaven,

IMITATIONS.

203

Buoy up the swilling skirts of Araby's
 Inhospitable wilds,
 And roll the dusty desert thro' the skies,
 Choaking the liberal air, and smothering
 Whole caravans at once; such havock spreads
 This war of heaven and earth, such sudden ruin
 Visits their houseless citizens, that shrink
 In the false shelter of the hills together,
 And hear the tempest howling o'er their heads
 That by and by o'erwhelms them. The very birds,
 Those few that troop'd not with the chimeing
 tribe. 100

Of amorous Summer, quit their ruffian element;
 And with domestic tameness hop and flutter
 Within the roofs of persecuting man,
 (Grown hospitable by like sense of sufferance;)
 Whither the hinds, the debt o' the day discharg'd,
 From kiln or barn repairing, shut the door 106
 On surly Winter; croud the clean-swept hearth
 And chearful shining fire; and doff the time,
 The whilst the maids their twirling spindles ply,
 With musty legends and ear-pathing tales; 110
 Of giants, and black necromantic bards,
 Of air-built castles, feats of madcap knights,
 And every hollow fiction of romance.
 And, as their rambling humour leads them, talk
 Of prodigies, and things of dreadful utterance;

That set them all agape, rouse up their hair, 116
 And make the ideot drops start from their eyes ;
 Of church-yards belching flames at dead of night,
 Of walking statues, ghosts unaffable,
 Haunting the dark waste tower or airless dun-
 geon ; 120

Then of the elves that deftly trip the green,
 Drinking the summer's moonlight from the flowers;
 And all the toys that phantasy pranks up
 T' amuse her fools withal.—Thus they lash on
 The snail-pac'd Hyperborean nights, till heaven
 Hangs with a juster poize : when the murk
 clouds 126

Roll'd up in heavy wreaths low-bellying, seem
 To kiss the ground, and all the waste of snow
 Look blue beneath 'em ; till plump'd with bloat-
 ing dropsy,

Beyond the bounds and stretch of continence, 130
 They burst at once ; down pours the hoarded rain,
 Washing the slippery winter from the hills,
 And floating all the vallies. The fading scene
 Melts like a lost enchantment or vain phantasm
 That can no more abuse. Nature resumes 135
 Her old substantial shape ; while from the waste
 Of undistinguishing calamity,
 Forests, and by their sides wide-skirted plains,
 Houses and trees arise ; and waters flow,
 That from their dark confinements bursting, spurn

Their brittle chains; huge sheets of loosen'd ice 141
 Float on their bosoms to the deep, and jarr
 And clatter as they pass; th' o'erjutting banks,
 As long unpractic'd to so steep a view,
 Seem to look dizzy on the moving pomp. 145

Now ev'ry petty brook that crawl'd along,
 Railing its pebbles, mocks the river's rage,
 Like the proud frog i' the fable. The huge *Da-*
nube,

While melting mountains rush into its tide,
 Rolls with such headstrong and unreined course,
 As it would choak the *Euxine's* gulphy maw,
 Bursting his chrystal cerements. The breathing
 time 152

Of peace expir'd, that hush'd the deafning scenes
 Of clam'rous indignation, ruffian War
 Rebels, and Nature stands at odds again; 155
 When the rous'd Furies of the fighting winds
 Torment the main; that swells its angry sides,
 And churns the foam betwixt its flinty jaws;
 While thro' the savage dungeon of the night
 The horrid thunder growls. Th' ambitious waves
 Assault the skies, and from the bursting clouds 161
 Drink the glib lightening; as if the seas
 Wou'd quench the ever-burning fires of heaven.
 Strait from their slipp'ry pomp they madly plunge
 And kiss the lowest pebbles. Wretched they 165

That 'midst such rude vexation of the deep
 Guide a frail vessel! Better ice-bound still,
 Than mock'd with liberty thus be resign'd
 To the rough fortune of the froward time;
 When Navigation all a-tiptoe stands 170
 On such unsteady footing. Now they mount
 On the tall billow's top, and seem to jowl
 Against the stars; whence (dreadful eminence!)
 They see with swimming eyes (enough to hurry
 round

In endless vertigo the dizzy brain) 175
 A gulph that swallows vision, with wide mouth
 Steep-yawning to receive them; down they duck
 To the rugged bottom of the main, and view
 The adamantine gates of vaulted hell:
 Thence tofs'd to light again; till borne adrift 180
 Against some icy mountains bulging sides
 They reel, and are no more.—Nor less by land
 Ravage the winds, that in their wayward rage
 Howl thro' the wide unhospitable glens;
 That rock the stable-planted towers, and shake 185
 The hoary monuments of ancient time
 Down to their flinty bases; that engage
 As they would tear the mountains from their
 roots,
 And brush the high heavens with their woody
 heads;
 Making the stout oaks bow.—But I forget 190

That sprightly Ver trips on old Winter's heel:
Cease we these notes too tragic for the time,
Nor jar against great Nature's symphony;
When even the blustrous elements grow tuneful,
Or listen to the concert. Hark! how loud 195
The cuckoo wakes the solitary wood!
Soft sigh the winds as o'er the greens they stray,
And murmuring brooks within their channels
play.

PROGNE'S DREAM:

Darkly expressive of some past Events
that were soon to be revealed to her.

— — — — Last night I dreamt,
Whate'er it may forbode it moves me strangely;
That I was rapt into the raving deep;
An old and reverend fire conducted me:
He plung'd into the bosom of the main, 5
And bade me not to fear but follow him.
I followed; with impetuous speed we div'd,
And heard the dashing thunder o'er our heads.
Many a slippery fathom down we sunk,
Beneath all plummets' sound, and reached the
bottom. 10
When there, I ask'd my venerable guide
If he could tell me where my sister was;
He told me that she lay not far from thence
Within the bosom of a flinty rock,
Where Neptune kept her for his paramour 15

Hid from the jealous Amphitrite's sight;
 And said he could conduct me to the place.
 I beg'd he wou'd. Through dreadful ways we
 past,
 'Twixt rocks that frightfully lower'd on either
 side,
 Whence here and there the branching coral
 sprung; 20
 O'er dead men's bones we walk'd, o'er heaps of
 gold and gems,
 Into a hideous kind of wilderness,
 Where stood a stern and prison-looking rock,
 Dawb'd with a mossy verdure all around,
 The mockery of paint. As we drew near 25
 Out sprung a hydra from a den below,
 A speckled fury; fearfully it hiss'd,
 And roll'd its sea-green eyes so angrily
 As it wou'd kill with looking. My old guide
 Against its sharp head hurl'd a rugged stone— 30
 The curling monster rais'd a brazen shriek,
 Wallow'd and died in fitful agonies.
 We gain'd the cave. Thro' woven adamant
 I look'd, and saw my sister all alone.
 Employ'd she seem'd in writing something sad,
 So sad she looked: Her cheek was wond'rous
 wan, 36
 Her mournful locks like weary sedges hung.

I call'd—she turning, started when she saw me;
 And threw her head aside as if ashamed;
 She wept, but would not speak—I call'd again;
 Still she was mute.—Then madly I address'd,
 With all the lion-sinews of despair,
 To break the flinty ribs that held me out;
 And with the struggling wak'd.—

S T O R M;

Raised to account for the late return of
a Messenger.

— — — The sun went down in wrath;
The skies foam'd brass, and soon th' unchained
winds

Burst from the howling dungeons of the north:
And rais'd such high delirium on the main,
Such angry clamour; while such boiling waves 5
Flash'd on the peevish eye of moody night,
It look'd as if the seas would scald the heavens.
Still louder chide the winds, th' enchain'd furge
Still answer'd louder; and when the sickly morn
Peep'd ruefully through the blotted thick-brow'd
east

10

To view the ruinous havock of the dark,
The stately towers of Athens seem'd to stand
On hollow foam tide-whipt; the ships that lay
Scorning the blast within the marble arms
Of the sea-child Portumnus, danc'd like corks

Upon th' enraged deep, kicking each other ; 15
And some were dash'd to fragments in this fray
Against the harbour's rocky chest. The sea
So roar'd, so madly raged, so proudly swell'd,
As it would thunder full into the streets,
And steep the tall Cecropian battlements 20
In foaming brine. The airy citadel,
Perch'd like an eagle on a high-brow'd rock,
Shook the salt water from its stubborn sides
With eager quaking ; the Cyclades appear'd
Like ducking Cormorants—Such a mutiny 25
Out-clamour'd all tradition, and gain'd belief
To ranting prodigies of heretofore.
Seven days it storm'd, etc.

AN
IMITATION
OF
SPENSER.

Written at Mr. THOMSON's desire, to be inserted
into the CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

I.

FULL many a fiend did haunt this house of
rest,

And made of passive wights an easy prey.
Here Lethargy with deadly sleep oppress,
Stretch'd on his back a mighty lubbard lay,
Heaving his sides; and snored night and day.
To stir him from his traunce it was not eath,
And his half-open'd eye he shut straightway:
He led I ween the softest way to death,
And taught withouten pain or strife to yield the
breath.

II.

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
 Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsie;
 Unwieldy man, with belly monstrous round
 For ever fed with watery supply;
 For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.
 And here a moping Mystery did sit,
 Mother of Spleen, in robes of various dye:
 She call'd herself the Hypochondriack Fit,
 And frantic seem'd to some, to others seem'd a
 wit.

III.

A lady was she whimsical and proud,
 Yet oft thro' fear her pride would crouchen
 low.
 She felt or fancied in her fluttering mood
 All the diseases that the Spitals know,
 And fought all physic that the shops bestow;
 And still new leaches and new drugs would
 try.
 'Twas hard to hit her humour high or low,
 For sometimes she would laugh and some-
 times cry,
 Sometimes would waxen wroth; and all she knew
 not why.

IV.

Fast by her side a listless virgin pin'd,
 With aching head and squeamish heart-burn-
 ings;
 Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,
 But lov'd in secret all forbidden things.
 And here the Tertian shook his chilling wings;
 And here the Gout, half tyger half a snake,
 Rag'd with an hundred teeth, an hundred stings:
 These and a thousand furies more did shake
 Those weary realms, and kept ease-loving men
 awake,

THE
OECONOMY
OF
LOVE:
A
POETICAL ESSAY.

Insanire docet certa ratione modoque.

THE
ECONOMY
OF
LIFE

A
PRACTICAL ESSAY

BY
JAMES H. HARRIS

THE
OECONOMY
OF
LOVE.

THY bounties, LOVE! in thy soft raptures
when

Timeliest the melting pairs indulge, and how
Best to improve the genial joy, how shun
The snakes that under rosy pleasure lurk,
I sing: if thou fair CYTHEREA deign
Gracious to smile on my attempt. Tho' thou
None of the muses nine, yet oft on thee
The muses wait, oft gambol in thy train
Tho' virgins. Come, nor leave thy Boy behind,
Blind but unerring archer. HYMEN raise
Aloft thy sacred torch. Your gifts I sing.

Ye youths and virgins, when your generous
blood

Has drunk the warmth of fifteen summers, now
The loves invite ; now to new raptures wakes
The finish'd sense : while stung with keen desire
The madd'ning boy his bashful fetters bursts ;
And, urg'd with secret flames, the riper maid,
Conscious and shy, betrays her smarting breast.

Yet nature not in all her sons maintains
An equal progress. This with kindly warmth
Concocts to manly vigour strait, while that
Pines crude and chill, and scarce at last attains
Imperfect life. Some slight their varnish'd steed,
And (wond'rous instinct !) bent on manlier sport,
Cope with the maids. ALCIDES thus, they say,
Rose brawny from his cradle, while the snakes
Hung hissing round him, horrible and fell,
Sent by enrag'd SATURNIA to destroy
Her rival's hope : the mighty infant grasp'd
His speckled foes, and smiling dash'd them down
To hell, their native clime : the spumy gore
Blotted the frighted pavement. Early thus
Was future chivalry presag'd.—Meantime
Others slow ripen : men there are who scarce
Feel the first thrillings of untaught desire,
While pallid maids scarce ruminate on man,
Till twenty ; well if then. It boots thee much
To study the complexion, much the clime,
And habitudes of life. Meanwhile with me

Credit these signs. The boy may wrestle, when
Night-working fancy steals him to the arms
Of nymph oft wish'd awake, and, 'mid the rage
Of the soft tumult, every turgid cell
Spontaneous disembogues its lucid store,
Bland and of azure tinct. Nor envy thou
Waking fruition, while such happy dreams
Visit thy slumbers; liveliest then the touch
Thrills to the brain, with all sensations else
Unshaken, uneduc'd. The maid demands
The dues of Venus, when the parting breasts
Wanton exuberant and tempt the touch,
Plump'd with rich moisture from the finish'd
growth,

Redundant now; for late the shooting tubs
Drunk all the blood the boiling heart could pour,
Insatiate; now full grown they crave no more
Than what repairs their daily waste. But still
There must be loss, nor does the superplus
Turn all to thrift. For from love's grotto now
Oozes the sanguine stream thro' many a rill,
Startling the simple lass, that anxious glows
Inward, till bold necessity o'ercomes
Her fond reluctant blushes, to consult
Her nurse, well vers'd in mystic cases deep,
At christ'nings oft discuss'd: when warm'd with
wine

The mellow matrons, by the midnight fire,

Lewd Orgies hold; while naked roams around,
 His torch-high flaming from the spicy bowl,
 Lust full of glee, and thro' each lab'ring breast
 His sacred fury pours. The Sybil solves
 Sagely the dubious case.—The rising down
 Then too begins to skirt the hallow'd bounds
 Of Venus' blest domain. In either sex
 This sign obtains. For nature provident,
 Now when both sides stand equal for the fray,
 This graceful armour spreads, and, but for this
 Excoriate oft the tender parts would rue
 The close encounter; now they fight secure
 Thus harness'd, and sustain the mutual shock
 Of war, unhurt, for many a well-fought day.

But if to progeny thy views extend
 Paternal, and the name of fire invites,
 Wouldst thou behold a thriving face surround
 Thy spacious table; shun the soft embrace
 Emasculant, till twice ten years and more
 Have steel'd thy nerves, and let the holy rite
 License the bliss. Nor would I urge, precise,
 A total abstinence; this might unman
 The genial organs, unemploy'd so long,
 And quite extinguish the prolific flame,
 Refrigerant. But riot oft unblam'd
 On kisses, sweet repast! ambrosial joy!
 Now press with gentle hand the gentle hand,

And, sighing, now the breasts, that to the touch
Heave amorous. Nor thou, fair maid, refuse
Indulgence, while thy paramour discreet
Aspires no further. Thus thou mayst expect
Treasure hereafter, when the bridegroom, warm,
Trembling with keen desire, profusely pours
The rich collection of enamour'd years,
Exhaustless, blessing all thy nuptial nights.

But, O my son! whether the generous care
Of propagation, and domestic charge,
Or soft encounter more attract, renounce
The vice of monks recluse, the early bane
Of rising manhood. Banish from thy shades
Th' ungenerous, selfish, solitary joy.
Hold, parricide! thy hand. For thee alone
Did nature form thee? for thy narrow self
Grant thee the means of pleasure? dream'st thou
so?

That very self mistakes its wiser aim;
Its finer sense ungratified, unpleas'd,
But when from active soul to soul rebounds
The swelling mingling tumult of delight,
Hold yet again! e'er idle callus wrap
In sullen indolence the astonish'd nerves;
When thou may'st fret and teize thy sense in vain,
And curse too late th' unwisely-wanton hours.
Impious, forbear! thus the first general hail

To disappoint, "increase and multiply,"
 To shed thy blossoms thro' the desert air,
 And sow thy perish'd off-spring in the winds.
 Unhallow'd pastime!—Tho' the factious chief
 Oft brew hot insurrection, rather hie
 To bagnio lewd or tavern, nightly where
 Venereal rites are done, from Draco's ken,
 Remote, and light of heaven (as erst retir'd
 The heaving Gallic saints to the kind gloom
 Of clift or cave, or trusted barn, to hold
 Forbidden sabbaths) rather visit thou
 Those haunts of public lewdness; oft tho' there
 Sore ills dismay. Purse, or the golden pride
 That decks thy finger, gorgeous with the spoils
 Of Mexico, Peru, and farthest Ind;
 Or watch time-measuring, oft subtracted fly
 Sink in the dark profound. And oft, to crush
 Thy slacken'd manhood, in the mid career
 Of puissant deeds, untimely rushes in
 A forward boist'rous wight, and from thy arms
 The passive spouse of all the town demands.
 Him, hung'ring after gold, nor words can charm,
 Nor more persuasive wine: thy gold must pay
 The violation of the public bed;
 Or braver steel must prove thy manly arm,
 In dubious fight. Yet well if here could end
 The mis'ry: worse perhaps ensues; a train
 Of ills of tedious count and horrid name.

Such as of old distress'd the man else squar'd
To God's own heart, but that he wide debauch'd
Jerusalem's fair daughters to his flames
Unquench'd; nor from the holy marriage-bed
Refrain'd his loose embraces, when the wife
Of wrong'd Urias he seduc'd; nor stopt
Till murder crown'd his lust. Hence him the
wrath

Of righteous Heaven, awaking, long pursued
With sore disease, and fill'd his loins with pain.
All day he roar'd, and all the tedious night
Bedew'd his couch with tears; and still his groans
Breathe musical in sacred song. What woes!
What pains he tried! But now this plague attacks
With double rancour, and severely marks
Modern offenders; undermines at once
The fame, and nose, that by unseemly lapse
Aukward deforms the human face divine
With ghastly ruins. Tho' this breach, they say,
Nice Taliacotius's art, with substitute
From porter's borrow'd or the callous breech
Of sedentary weaver, oft repair'd.
Precarious, for no sooner fate demands
The parent stock, than (pious sympathy!)
Revolts th' adopted nose.—Such ills attend
Th' obscene embrace of harlots. Wiser thou

Find some soft nymph whom tender sympathy

Attracts to thee, while all her captives else,
 Aw'd by majestic beauty, mourn aloof
 Her charms to thee, by nuptial vows, and choice
 More sure, devoted. Sacrifice to her
 The precious hours, nor grudge with such a mate
 The summer's day to toy or winter's night.
 Now with your happy arms her waist surround,
 Fond-grasping; on her swelling bosom now
 Recline your cheek, with eager kisses press
 Her balmy lips, and drinking from her eyes
 Resistless love, the tender flame confess,
 Ineffable but by the murmuring voice
 Of genuine joy; then hug and kiss again,
 Stretch'd on the flow'ry turf, while joyful glows
 Thy manly pride, and throbbing with desire
 Pants earnest, felt thro' all the obstacles
 That intervene: but love, whose fervid course
 Mountains nor seas oppose, can soon remove
 Barriers so slight. Then when her lovely limbs,
 Oft lovely deem'd, far lovelier now beheld,
 Thro' all your trembling joints increase the flame;
 Forthwith discover to her dazzled sight
 The stately novelty, and to her hand
 Usher the new acquaintance. She perhaps
 Averse will coldly chide, and half afraid,
 Blushing, half-pleased, the tumid wonder view
 With neck retorted and oblique regard;
 Nor quite her curious eye indulging, nor

Refraining quit. Perhaps when you attempt
The sweet admission, toyful she resists
With shy reluctance; nathless you pursue
The soft attack, and push the gentle war,
Fervent, till quite o'erpower'd, the melting maid
Faintly opposes. On the brink at last
Arriv'd of giddy rapture, plunge not in
Precipitant, but spare a virgin's pain;
Oh! spare a gentle virgin! spare yourself!
Lest sanguine war love's tender rites profane
With fierce dilaceration, and dire pangs
Reciprocal. Nor droop because the door
Of bliss seems shut and barricaded strong;
But triumph rather in this faithful pledge
Of innocence, and fair virginity
Inviolatè. And hence the subtle wench,
Her maiden honours torn, in evil hour
Unseemly torn, and shrunk her virgin rose,
Studious how best the guilty wound to heal,
Her shame best palliate with fair outward shew,
Inward less strict, with painful hand collects
The sylvan store. The lover myrtle yields
Her styptic berries, and the horrid thorn
Its prune austere; in vain the caper hides
Its wand'ring roots; the mighty oak himself,
Sole tyrant of the shade, that long had 'scap'd
The tanner's rage, spoiled of his callous rhind,

Stands bleak and bare. These, and a thousand
more,

Of humbler growth and far inferior name,
Bistort, and dock, and that way-faring herb
Plantain, her various forage, boil'd in wine
Yield their astringent force, a lotion prov'd
Thrice powerful to contract the shameful breach.
Beware of these, for in our dangerous days
Such counterfeits abound; whom next to know
Concerns. And here expect no dye of wound,
No wound is made; the corrugated parts,
With ill-dissembled virtue (tho' severe,
Not wrinkled into frowns when genuine most)
Relapse apace, and quit their borrow'd tone.
Yet judge with charity the varied work
Of nature's hand. Perhaps the purple stream,
Emollient bath, leaves flexible and lax
The parts it lately wash'd. But hapless he,
In nuptial night, on whom a horrid chasm
Yawns dreadful, waste and wild; like that thro'
which

The wand'ring Greek, and Cytherea's son,
Diving, explor'd hell's adamantine gates:
An unessential void; where neither love
Nor pleasure dwells, where warm creation dies
Starv'd in th' abortive gulph; the dire effects
Of use too frequent, or for love or gold.

Now hear me, lovers, ye whose roving hearts
No sacred nuptial chains have yet confin'd;
Attentive hear, and daily, nightly weigh
The counsels sage which, thro' my raptur'd breast,
To you th' auspicious heavenly MUSE conveys:
The MUSE, no soothing minister of vice;
Tho' now in sportive vein to youthful ears
She tunes her song, to give instruction grace.
Attend, ye wise: no frantic Bacchanal,
No shameless bard of the licentious rout
Of flush'd Silenus, sings.—What NATURE bids
Is good, is wise, and faultless we obey.
We must obey; howe'er hard Stoic dreams
Of Apathy, much vaunted, seldom prov'd:
For oft beneath the philosophic gloom
Sly LEWDNESS lurks, and oftener mazy GUILT,
That with well-mimick'd love th' unwary heart
Lures to its fate, and hails while it betrays.
There bloated PRIDE too dwells, and baneful

HATE,
And dark REVENGE, than which a deadlier fiend
Ne'er poison'd mortal breast, nor urg'd the soul
To ruthless purpose and inhuman deeds.
Far hence be these. We know great nature's
power;
Mother of things, whose vast unbounded sway
From the deep centre all around extends

Wide to the flaming barriers of the world.
We feel her power; we strive not to repress,
(Vainly repress'd, or to deformity)
Her lawful growth; ours be the task alone
To check her rude excrescences, to prune
Her wanton overgrowth, and where she strays
In uncouth shapes to lead her gently back,
With prudent hand, to form and better use.

For wisest ends this universal POWER
Gave appetites, from whose quick impulse life
Subsists, by which we truly live, all life
Inspid else, unactive, unenjoy'd.
Hence too this peopled earth, which, that extinct,
That flame for propagation, soon would roll
A lifeless mass, and plainly cumber heaven.
Then love of pleasure sways each heart, and we
From that no more than from ourselves can fly.
Blameless when govern'd well. But where it errs
Extravagant, and wildly leads to ill,
Public or private, there its curbing power
Cool reason must exert. This lesson weigh,
Ye tender pairs. Indulge your gentle flames,
Each fondest wish, and bath your souls in love.
But let discretion guard the hour of bliss,
Virtuous in pleasure. So you shall enjoy
Pleasure unmix'd, and without thorn the rose.

This caution scorn'd, beware th' event perverse:
 Expect for pleasure, pain and sharp remorse;
 For love, aversion; and each broken vow
 The jest of fools, the pity of the wise.

Be secret, lovers. Let no dangerous spy
 Catch your soft glances, as oblique they deal
 Mutual contagion, darting all the soul
 In missive love, nor hear your lab'ring sighs.
 But chiefly when the high-wrought rapture calls,
 Impatient, to soft deeds, then then retire
 From every mortal ken. "The sapient king"
 (Whose loves who could defame?) in the mild
 gloom,

"Held dalliance with his fair Ægyptian spouse."
 Find then some soft obscure retreat, untrod
 By mortals else, where thick-embow'ring shades
 Condense to darkness and embrown the day;
 There, safe from all profane access, pursue
 Love's bashful rites. For oft the curious eye
 Of prying childhood, and th' aspect malign,
 Waning, and wan, of virgin stale in years,
 Shed baneful influence on the rites of love.
 And thou, my son, when floods of mellowing wine
 And social joys have loosen'd all thy breast,
 When every secret gushes, this at least
 This one reserve, of love and bounteous charms

Of trusting beauty; venturing all for thee,
For thy delight, her fortune and her fame;
For her thou nothing. Hold! ingrateful, hold
Thy wanton tongue! Leave to the last of fools,
Of villains! that ungenerous vanity,
Cruel and base, to vaunt of secret joys;
Of joys on thee, so vaunting, ill bestow'd.
O dare not thus with mortal sting to wound
The tender helpless sex! Does thy vile breath
So blast my sister's, or my daughter's fame,—
By heaven thou dy'st! thy treacherous blood alone
Can wash my honour clean. Prudent meantime,
Ye generous maids, revenge your sex's wrong;
Let not the mean destroyer e'er approach
Your sacred charms. Now muster all your pride,
Contempt, and scorn, that shot from beauty's eye
Confounds the mighty impudent, and smites
The front unknown to shame. Trust not his vows,
His labour'd sighs, and well-dissembled tears,
Nor swell the triumph of known perjury.

Meanwhile, my son, if angry fate, or love
Grown indiscreet, or loud Lucina, tell
Th' important secret: is thy mate well form'd,
Virtuous, and equal for thy lawful bed,
Save her, I charge thee, from foul infamy,
And lonely shame; let wedlock's holy tie
Legitimate th' indissoluble flames.

If abject birth, dishonourable, and mind
Incultivate or vicious, to that height
Forbid her hopes to climb; at least secure
From penury her humble state, by thee
Else humbled more, and to necessity,
Stern foe to virtue, fame, and life, betray'd,
A helpless prey. O! let no parent's woe,
No plaints of trusting innocence, nor tears
Of pining beauty, blast thy guilty joys.
Shall she, so late the softner of thy life,
Thy chief delight, whose melting essence oft
Lay with thy melting essence kindly mix'd
(As far as bodies and embodied souls
Can mingle) she, who deem'd thy vows sincere,
Thy passion more than selfish, and thy love
To her devoted, as was her's to thee;
Shall she (O cruel perfidy!) at last [sick,
When with her tainted name the winds grow
When envious prudery chides, affecting scorn
Of natural joys, and they of "public fame"
Insulting hail her sister, while each friend
Disgusted flies; shall she not find in thee
Unshaken amity? when to thy arms,
Well-known, with wonted confidence she flies,
To pour her sorrows forth, and soothe her cares,
Shall she then find thy faithless heart from home,
From her estrang'd? at that disastrous hour
Wilt thou ungently spurn her from thy love?

To waste in sickly grief her once-priz'd charms,
Forlorn to languish out her life, to lead
Despis'd, unwedded, her dishonour'd days ?
Or, if her barren fortune, hard like thee,
Scowls meagre want (whose iron empire pride,
Reluctant, and her off-spring modesty
Blushing at last obey) unskill'd in arts
Of mercenary Venus, to increase
The romping band that, without pleasure lewd,
With deep-felt sorrow gay, thro' Trivia's reign
Nightly sollicit lovers; oft repuls'd,
Oft, when invited to the barren toil,
Thankless deserted by their slippery loves.
Or to the salt of years, where tedious lust
Uncouth and monstrous creeps thro' freezing loins,
Patient submitted; to the boist'rous will
Of midnight ruffians, to abhorr'd disease,
Hourly expos'd, and Draco's fiercer rage.
Spare, mighty Draco ! spare a hapless race,
By thy own sex to wretchedness betray'd.
A woman bore thee; by each tender name
Of woman, spare. Hast thou or daughter fair,
Or sister ? they, but for a happier birth,
The gift of fate, and, honour's guardian, pride
Early inspir'd, had swell'd the common stream.
While she whom now thy awful name dismays,
Portentous heard from far, with fortune's smiles

And fair example, might have grac'd thy bed,
A virtuous mate, in every charm complete.

A pious duty next, neglected oft,
Demands my song. If from thy secret bed
Of luxury unbidden off-spring rise,
Let them be kindly welcom'd to the day.
'Tis nature bids. To nature's high behests
Attend, and from the monster-breeding deep,
The ravag'd air, and howling wilderness,
Learn parent virtues. Shall the growling bear
Be more a fire than thou? An infant once,
Helpless and weak, but for paternal care,
Thou hadst not liv'd to propagate a race
To misery, to resign to step-dame fate
Perhaps a worthier off-spring than thy fire
Tenderly rear'd. For from the stolen embrace,
Untir'd with worn acquaintance, keenly urg'd,
Elate with generous rapture, likeliest springs
The noblest brood, most animated, best.
What heroes hence have issued! what fam'd chiefs!
And demy-gods, of old! the stealth of love
Gave Greece her Hercules, and mighty Rome
First rose beneath a random son of Mars.
Thy vigour too, the blossom of thy strength,
Reckless and wild profus'd, in dangerous days,
Or in the senate wise, and nobly warm
To public good, may save the rushing state;

Or, bold in arms, may roll her thunders forth
To shatter distant skies, and rous'd to blood
Usher the British lion to the field.

Thy country claims thy care; nurse well her hopes,
And thine; nor thou her church's hungry wolves,
Hight "overseers," with thy own children's gore
Satiates, if rapine know satiety.

For, bred to death, and of sagacious nose,
A prowling herd, lur'd with the recent smell
Of secret birth, their carnage sweet, or led
By infant wailings, querulous, and shrill,
Beset thy frightened gates. These timely thou
Prevent, or mourn too late thy ravish'd gold
And captive son; to the street-dunning tribe
Of mendicants let out, fictitious badge
Of low distress: there to what life of pain
Led up who knows? to what disgraceful fate,
What gibbet, bred? or from his parent's arms,
With nurse unpitying, unbenign, exil'd
To squalid lodge, to find in famine's cave
A ling'ring death; or by a deadlier hag,
Than her that rides the lab'ring night, oppress'd,
Untimely sink beneath a heavier fate.
While they, the sons of licens'd rapine, screen'd
Under the altar of the God of life
With murder stain'd, on what should raise thy son
Nightly regale, carnivorous; for them
The heifer bleeds, or for her slaughter'd young

Roams wild the woodland bounds; and what
should now

To thy young hopes run soft in balmy rills
Lacteous, to them in deep Oporto flows,
Or hot Madeira. Thus the sanguine feast
They crown, nor dread the cry of infant blood.

These precepts wisely keep, by these direct
Thy steps thro' pleasure's labyrinth. Unhurt
And unoffending, thus thy tutor'd feet
May trade the wilds of else-delusive joy.
So shall no sorrows wound, no ruder cares
Disturb thy pleasures, no remorseful tears
Attend thy gay delight; no sighs make way,
But such as heaves the pleasure-burden'd breast,
As utter love, with speechless eloquence
Well understood, and breathe from soul to soul
The soft infection, fondly still receiv'd.

Almighty Love! O unexhausted source
Of universal joy! first principle
Of NATURE all creating! harmony
By which her mighty movements all are rul'd!
Soft tyrant of each element! whose sway
Resistless thro' the wilds of air is felt,
Thro' earth, and the deep empire of the main!
Thy willing slaves, we own thy gentle power,

In us supreme, with kind endearments rais'd
 Above the merely-sensual touch of brutes.
 By thy soft charm the savage breast is tam'd,
 The genius rais'd. Thy heavenly warmth inspires
 Whate'er is noble, generous, or humane,
 Or elegant; whate'er adorns the mind,
 Graces or sweetens life: and without thee
 Nothing or gay or amiable appears.

Yet not to love (thus polishing the soul,
 Thus charming, tho' of every finer breast
 The sovereign joy) yet not to love alone
 Yield languid all your hours. The self-same cates
 Still offer'd soon the appetite offend;
 The most delicious soonest. Other joys,
 Other pursuits, their equal share demand
 Of cultivation. These with kindly change
 Will cheer your sweetly-varied days; from these
 With quicker sense you shall and firmer nerves
 Return to love, when love again invites.
 Be those the least neglected which inform
 With virtue, sense, and elegance, the mind:
 Those what before was amiable improve,
 And lend to love new grace and dignity.
 Life too has serious cares, which madly scorn'd,
 The means of pleasure melt.—And age will come,
 When love, alas! the flower of human joys,
 Must shrink in horrid frost. O hapless he!

Thrice hapless then ! whose only joy was that ;
Whose young desires tumultuous still engage
To wield a load of unobedient limbs,
With vain attempt. Him the inclement power
Of craving " impotence," to fonder toys
Than other dotage knows, or easy-dup'd
Credulity can well believe, incites.
Him all the nymphs despise, and the young loves
With leering scorn behold ; while vigorous heat
Has fled his shaken limbs, surviving still
In his green fancy. Thence what desperate toil
By flagellation, and the rage of blows,
To rouse the Venus loitering in his veins !
Fruitless, for Venus unsolicited
The kindest smiles, abhorring painful rites.
Cease, reverend fathers ! from those youthful
sports
Retire, before unfinish'd feats betray
Your slacken'd nerves. The hoary years, design'd
For wisdom, for sedate philosophy,
And contemplation, ill agree with love.
Chearful retire : nor grudge in peevish saws,
Like envious monitors, the sprightly joys
Of lusty youth. You had your genial time
Of pleasure ; ours is on the rapid wing.

And you whose youthful blood impetuous rolls,
With generous spirits fraught and kindly balm,

Husband your vigour well; if aught or health,
Or off-spring numerous, beautiful, and strong,
Or pleasure weigh. For from the trite embrace
Follow faint relaxation, strength impair'd,
Disgust, and mutual apathy, love's bane.
Some boast, I know, their vigour to renew
And keen desire, by food restorative,
Or pharmacy more noxious. Orchis hence,
Lascivious bulb, Satyrion better nam'd,
And that maritime, which the sea-born queen
Feeds with her native spume, Eryngo mild;
Boletus, fam'd among the fungous tribe,
And fell Cantharides, in various forms
Are us'd. But what ensues? diseases more
Than ever burden'd Aulter's dropping wings.
Cold Tremors, Spasms, and Cephalæa's dire,
Eternal flux of nature's balmy dew,
Tabes, and gaunt Marasmus, hideous loss
Of godlike reason, and th' imprison'd rage
Of fierce Lipyria, whose collected fires
The vitals only seize. Or if the sons
Of jaded luxury those plagues escape,
They waste their melting youth, and bring grey
 hairs
Before their time, grey hairs and idle years.
Leave nature to herself, nor covet more
Than nature gives, that but to real wants
Each well-conducted appetite provokes,

But chiefly thee, fair nymph, behoves to know
That love and joy, when in their prime, most fear
Decay, the fate of all created things.
Be frugal then: the coyly-yielded kiss
Charms most, and gives the most sincere delight.
Cheapness offends; hence on the harlot's lip
No rapture hangs, however fair she seem,
However form'd for love and amorous play.
Hail MODESTY! fair female honour, hail!
Beauty's chief ornament, and beauty's self!
For beauty must with virtue ever dwell,
And thou art virtue! and without thy charm
Beauty is insolent and wit profane.
Thou giv'st the smile its grace, the heighten'd kiss
Its balmy essence sweet! and but for thee
The very raptures of the lawful bed,
Were outrage and foul riot, rites obscene!
Celestial maid! be it lawful that with lips
Profane I name thee, and in wanton song.
But in these vicious days great Nature's laws
Are spurn'd; eternal Virtue, which nor time,
Nor place can change, no custom changing all,
Is mock'd to scorn; and "lewd abuse" instead,
Daughter of night, her shameless revels holds
O'er half the globe, while the chaste face of day
Eclipses at her rites. For man with man,
And man with woman (monstrous to relate!)
Leaving the natural road, themselves debase

With deeds unseemly, and dishonour foul.
 Britons, for shame! be male and female still.
 Banish this foreign vice; it grows not here,
 It dies, neglected; and in clime so chaste
 Cannot but by forc'd cultivation thrive.
 So cultivated swells the more our shame,
 The more our guilt. And shall not greater guilt
 Meet greater punishment and heavier doom?
 Not lighter for delay. Did justice spare
 The men of Sodom erst? Like us they sinn'd,
 Like us they sought the paths of monstrous joy;
 Till, urg'd to wrath at last, all-patient Heaven
 Descending wrapt them in sulphureous storm.
 And where proud palaces appear'd, the haunts
 Of luxury, now sleeps a fullen pool:
 Vengeful memorial of Almighty ire,
 Against the sons of lewdness exercis'd!



T H E E N D.

